

Bhakti Yoga Sagar

Swami Satyananda Saraswati



V O L U M E O N E

Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

Bhakti Yoga Sagar

VOLUME ONE

With kind regards, ॐ and prem

Sriani Niranjan

Bhakti Yoga Sagar

(Ocean of the Yoga of Devotion)

Swami Satyananda Saraswati

*Satsangs at Sri Panch Dashnam Paramahansa Alakh
Bara, Rikhia, Deoghar, during the month of Darshan,
from 18th November to 17th December 1994*

VOLUME ONE



Yoga Publications Trust, Munger, Bihar, India

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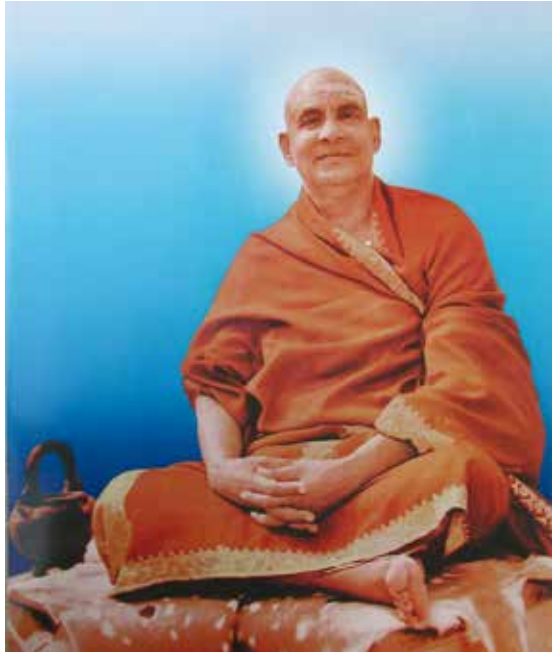
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Dedication

*In humility we offer this dedication to
Swami Sivananda Saraswati, who initiated
Swami Satyananda Saraswati into the secrets of yoga.*

Dedication

*This book is dedicated
To all the disciples, devotees and friends
Of Swami Satyananda Saraswati
Who have served and loved him
Throughout the four corners of the world.
To all the spiritual seekers
Who have known him directly
Or been inspired by his teachers
Or by his teachings.*

*May these nectarine words
Of love and devotion to God
Spread like rays of light
To assuage the anguish and longing
In the hearts of all sadhaks,
Sannyasins and yoga minded people.*

*May these words of wisdom
Bring peace and solace to all those
Who are suffering and distressed.
And may they provide direction
And a vision of the spiritual path
For all of humanity, East and West,
Both now and in times to come.*

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Foreword

*I*n order for one to attain success in yoga, as well as in life, personal attainment and prosperity are not enough. For success, just three ingredients are required: commitment, dedication and devotion to that which is beyond oneself. Unless we are able to develop these three qualities in our yoga and in our life, we can never find satisfaction or fulfillment. Real success is not measured by status, monetary gain or any personal achievement, but by how much one is able to offer others in their time of need, for their upliftment and for the removal of their distress.

Man is not an island or a separate unit unto himself. We are all part and parcel of this world, of this vast universe. We are in the universe, and the universe is in us. No one is in any way different from another. All are comprised of the same consciousness and energy, the same five elements. All breathe the same air, drink the same water, eat the same food, walk the same earth. All feel the same emotions and think the same thoughts. So, what is it that makes us feel different from each other? Our illusion about self, our sense of individuality, of self-importance, of egocentricity, which blocks our vision of totality, of oneness with humanity and with the entire creation.

When will we be free? Freedom is not a commodity which can be purchased politically, socially or professionally. Freedom is an understanding of oneself in relation to others, the part in relation to the whole. We will never be free until we learn

to share with others. There is always someone with less than us, no matter how little we have. There are thousands of ways to share our knowledge, abilities, facilities, experience, faith, belief, money, property, food, clothes, books, ideas.

It is not by accumulating and enriching ourselves that we become free. We become free by giving what we have to others. The different ways and forms of our sharing are the measure of our freedom, of our capacity to realize God. By God, I do not mean that Holy Father who lives up somewhere in heaven, but that divinity which resides in us and in all beings, sentient and insentient, in equal measure.

It is of no use to build up anything for ourselves. All these accumulations become our bondage, our barrier. They keep us fenced off from the higher reality, the vision of totality. The more we give, the greater we become, because we learn to see ourselves in others. Their suffering becomes our suffering and their joy our joy.

A life of selfish acquisition and material satisfaction is not worth living or dying for. At the end of it, what will we have that is still ours? Nothing. No money, no possessions, no property, no house, no car, no job, no relation, no friend will ever pass out of this life with us. The only thing that will go with us on that last day will be our karmas, our deeds, whether positive or negative, selfish or unselfish, and nothing else.

That is why in this life it is very important to always be on the lookout for opportunities to give, to serve and to contribute something for the welfare and betterment of another. This is the way to attain happiness, fulfillment and transcendence in this life and in the life to come. With every positive deed, we remove the shackles of ten years of negative deeds. We become brighter, younger, healthier and more vital.

What is it that makes us dull, old, sick and oppressed? The cause is not external; it is our internal limitations which bind us to a narrow, selfish view of life. That is the cause of all our suffering. In order to remove our suffering we must remove our limitations. We must live to help and serve others and not ourselves. We must reach beyond our immediate family

and our personal needs, and develop a broader identity that encompasses the entire humanity, the entire creation, the entire cosmos. This is freedom; not any political, social or religious ideology.

Nowadays, people in the West have forgotten the spirit in which yoga first came to them from this land. They have made their own yoga federations and associations, and erected high fences around them. Each says, "This is our yoga. No other yoga is permitted here. Learn our way, teach our way, or get out." So we find British yoga, French yoga, Greek yoga, German yoga, Swedish yoga, Italian yoga, Japanese yoga, USA yoga, but these are not the yogas that I teach or ever taught.

I have taught only one yoga, that which leads to freedom. All others are paths of bondage. Please do not think that I am speaking against any yoga teacher or institution, but I feel that the present concept and direction of yoga must change. Yoga must be unified, freed of separate ideals, power struggles and narrow concepts of spiritual attainment.

Attitudes must change, barriers must come down, so that a new yoga can emerge. This will be the yoga of unity, of giving, sharing and uplifting as one team. As organs and parts of one body, we must work together in one connected and concerted effort to serve humanity, to share our knowledge, our gifts, our capacities, our labour, for the common good, for a better world.

When we are able to see the disease, disharmony and distress of others as our own, and begin to alleviate and remove it by our united effort, then our yoga will need only one banner. Call it freedom, call it mukti, call it bliss. If we are involved in any yoga for our personal development, knowledge and evolution, that yoga is not going to help us. Finally we will have to leave it and search for another path.

The ways of the world are many, but the way to God, to spirit, to divinity, is one. Dedication to the upliftment of others, seeing others in oneself and oneself in others; this is the ultimate yoga. There is no other way to change our limited, egocentric vision to a cosmic vision. This is the path and this is the yoga of the next century; call it 'freedom yoga'.

There is no need to waste time in practising other yogas. Life does not have enough days, hours and minutes to perform all the good deeds that need to be done in order to balance the bad deeds that were done before. In this birth, we have the opportunity to serve the poor and downtrodden by offering food, clothes, money, medicine, books, toys, tools, building materials, bicycles, cows, bullocks, and other things which can help to remove distress from the lives of individuals, families and communities.

This is my path, and this is the yoga that I wish to propagate in the coming century for the benefit of all mankind and the highest attainment of yoga. There is no other *nirvana*, no other enlightenment. This is the way to freedom.

It is not my intention to insult or offend anyone's view, concept or practice of yoga. However, we must bear in mind that the yogas expounded in the twentieth century were suited to the needs and evolution of humanity for that period. Therefore, the form of yoga was limited to self-discipline, self-introspection and self-improvement.

Now, yoga is taking another step forward. It is expanding beyond the personal, selfish and narrow confines of individual practice, teachings and ideals, to encompass a broad spectrum of devotion, dedication and integral participation in human emancipation.

This is not my order. It has been decided by forces which are beyond me. There will be no other way to evolve through yoga. All will eventually have to pull down their separate fences and signboards and begin to work together in one united, consecutive effort to uplift and free humanity from all forms of deprivation and degradation.

The misery of others is our misery. To free another of their misery is our freedom, our happiness and our fulfillment. Not to speak of freeing whole families, communities, states, nations and worlds. Freedom is infinite for those who walk in the light of this yoga, who take up the path of giving and sharing, and who devote their time and their money to the upliftment of others.

Satsang 1

November 17, 1994, Morning

In the course of life, human beings tend to forget many experiences and impressions. There are innumerable objects we have seen in this world and countless ideas that we have contemplated. If all our thoughts and impressions could be fed into a computer and a printout taken, it would extend from here to infinity. Millions and billions of thoughts and ideas have come to our minds and they still exist there in the form of *samskaras*. Thoughts create *samskaras*, which are the seeds of our mental impressions. During life the *samskaras* are stored in the *sukshma sharira*, or subtle body. Just as a seed is responsible for the existence of a plant, in the same way it is this mental seed, or *samskara*, which leaves with the individual soul, the *jivatma*, at the time of death, and is responsible for the next birth. The *karana sharira*, or causal body, carries it. The *sthoola sharira*, or gross body, may perish, but not these *samskaras*.

For centuries the question of immortality has been raised by man. The Egyptians preserved the body in the form of a mummy, thinking that man was immortal. The body is not immortal, but the thoughts which you had from the age when you first started thinking are still with you. Although you may not remember them, they are still there. Sometimes you may suddenly remember, "Oh, that is what I used to think as a child." You are able to remember what you thought at the age of five, six or even at the very end of your life. If you try to access those thoughts now, you may not be

able to make a printout, but they are still there stored in the subtle mind.

Therefore, you should not underestimate the creation of that God who is very mischievous. You can talk about Him in any manner you like, but no manner of speaking or description of Him is adequate. No matter how you describe God, it remains inadequate. Ultimately, you can only say, “*Neti, neti*”; “Not this! Not this!” People describe the form of Lord Shankara, but has anyone seen it? Yes, someone must have seen it. I have also seen it and I believe in it. God has a form but He is formless too.

How can that which is formless have a form?

Why can't a formless entity have form? What is the form of clay? An earthen lamp? A clay pot? Clay does not have a form of its own, but whatever form you give it, that becomes its form. Does gold have a form of its own? A chain? No, the form of gold is not a chain. Gold has been made into that form, but it has no form of its own. You can make gold into a bracelet. You give it a form, *sakara*, and a name, but neither that name nor that form is the form of gold. Just as gold is formless, God is also formless. We may have depicted Him as Rama and Krishna, but it will not be incorrect to also say that He is formless, *nirakara*.

In *Ramacharitamanas*, Shiva tells Parvati that God takes different forms according to the love of His devotees:

*The sages, wise men, Vedas and Puranas, all profess
There is no difference between God
With or without attributes.
That attributeless, formless, invisible and unborn One
Possesses attributes according to the devotees' love.
Shaking off non-form
The One possesses attributes
Like water freezing into solid ice.*

Does that mean somebody must have seen those forms and then described them?

Yes, of course. Different people have seen Him in different forms. Someone saw Him in the form of a yogi, or as a mad man, or with Ganga flowing from his matted locks. Others saw Him in the form of a naked ascetic, as a ghost, as a person intoxicated with ganja. Some saw Him as a beautifully adorned bridegroom on His way to marry Parvati. He has been seen in innumerable forms. Why should anybody lie about this? What would be gained? What is truth is truth. God exists in all forms.

You may see God in the form of a serpent; or Devi, the goddess; or a hideous sadhu; or Bala Mukunda, the beautiful child Krishna; or Sri Rama with bow in hand. You may see God in any form. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (10:21–26), Lord Krishna says, “Among Vedas, I am the Sama; among trees, I am the peepul; among rivers, I am the Ganga; among months, I am Marga Sheersha; among heavenly bodies, I am the moon . . .”

*Of the twelve Adityas, I am Vishnu;
Of the luminaries, the radiant Sun;
I am Marichi among the Maruts;
Of the constellations, the moon am I.*

*Of the Vedas, I am the Sama;
I am Vasava among the gods;
Of the senses, I am the mind;
And I am intelligence among living beings.*

*Of the Rudras, I am Shankara;
Of the Yakshas and Rakshasas, I am Kubera;
Of the Vasus, I am Pavaka;
And of the seven mountains, I am Meru.*

*Of the household priests, O Arjuna,
Know me to be Brihaspati, the chief;
Of the army generals, I am Skanda;
Of the lakes, I am the ocean.*

*Of the great rishis, I am Bhrigu;
Of the words, I am the syllable, Om;
Of the yajnas, I am japa yajna;
And of immovable things, I am the Himalayas.*

*Of the trees, I am Asvattha;
Of the devarishis, I am Narada.
Of the Gandharvas, I am Chitraratha
And of siddhas, I am Muni Kapila.*

You can worship God in whatever form you wish, and that very form will appear before you. As Tulsidas says in *Ramacharitamanas*: “Everyone visualized in the person of the Lord the reflection of his own emotional disposition.”

If you think that all this is fiction, let me tell you, nothing that exists in this world is fiction; everything is reality. I speak on the basis of my experience, whatever little I have had. God is our friend who always works for our wellbeing. We are the ones who forget Him. Swami Sivananda and many sages used to sing a bhajan of Mahatma Binduji:

*I have entrusted all the responsibilities of my life to You,
O Lord, now my upliftment or downfall depends on You.
I never remember You,
Still You never abandon me.
I am mischievous,
Still you are my benefactor.
The difference between You and me is that
I am Nara and You are Narayana.
I am in the clutches of the world
Which is under Your rule.
Trying to sail over the ocean of separation
I am suspended in mid-journey,
Yet I am confident because the rudder is in Your hands.*

God exists and He remains always with us like a friend. Swami Sivananda used to say, “God is the breath of the breath, prana of the pranas, and the life of lives. God is my reality. This is the only truth in life.”

What should be the goal or purpose of life?

Many people remain insulated due to their narrow-mindedness and due to maya, so the electricity does not flow through them. If we remove the insulation, then the power of God will begin flowing through us. There is a favourite bhajan of Swami Sivananda which he always used to sing:

*In earth, water, fire, air and ether is Ram.
In the heart, mind, prana and senses is Ram.
In the breath, blood, nerves and brain is Ram.
In sentiment, thought, word and action is Ram.*

*Within is Ram, without is Ram
In front is Ram, behind is Ram.
Above is Ram, below is Ram
To the right is Ram, to the left is Ram
Everywhere is Ram.
Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram*

*Refuge, solace, path, Lord, witness is Ram.
Father, mother, friend, relative, guru is Ram.
Support, source, centre, ideal, God is Ram.
Creator, preserver, destroyer, redeemer is Ram.
Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram Ram*

*The ultimate goal of one and all is Ram.
Attainable through shraddha, prem and worship is Ram.
Accessible to devotion and surrender is Ram.
Approachable by prayer, japa and kirtan is Ram.*

*Hosanna to Ram, glory to Ram, victory to Ram.
Adorations to Ram, salutations to Ram,
Prostrations to Ram.
Om Sri Ram, Jaya Ram, Jaya Jaya Ram.*

There is also a verse by Kabir:

*When Atma was realized, these thoughts arose.
I became friendly to all and lust and anger disappeared.
In a learned man or in a yogi
The same Brahman pervades.*

*A king or a pauper, a physician or a patient
In all these is He, and all are in Him.
In this way He plays.
Although He does not appear in different bodies
He is yet within them all.
After much thinking,
I have come to the conclusion
That no one can narrate His attributes.
Kabir says that all wise and learned people
Sing of His glory and playful attitude.*

These songs were not only the experience of Swamiji; every saint has expressed the same sentiment: God is my friend, my breath, my life. When love for God becomes so deep and intense we are able to see God everywhere, just as a lover sees his beloved everywhere. In you, in me, in everybody, the glory of God is visible everywhere. Experiencing That, I also become That. Wherever you look, you see Rama. To experience that is the purpose of life. All other activities like study, service, fulfilment of desire, rearing children, keeping accounts, have to be done, but all that is *maya*, illusion.

There is no need to leave home in order to experience this, but we should always think about it. What is God? How can I communicate with Him? If I am He, how can I realize it? That thought should be constantly in our mind. If we are part of God, how can we experience it? We have forgotten that we are a part of Him. If you have amnesia due to a brain injury, you will have to be told your name, because you won't remember it. In the same way, you have forgotten God; this is also amnesia.

This realization is the goal of life. Other things are not the real purpose of life, because twenty to twenty-five years from now they will all end. This is just a game of the ego in which we are all involved. It is not that the world is cursed; I am not denigrating it. Everybody has to live in the world. The world is like a pool of mud. You can choose to live like the lotus or like the worm, but at any rate you will have to live in this pool of mud.

An Urdu poet has said:

*The misfortune of man is unfathomable
Being the Lord himself
And yet looking like an ordinary person.*

If God loves everybody, then why is there suffering in the world?

My mother loves me, but if I have a physical problem, she will have me operated upon. At the time of the operation, I will cry with pain. I cannot say that my mother is cruel because of this step she has taken. Tulsidas says:

*Although the child, while being operated upon
Feels the pain and cries helplessly,
The mother does not mind the child's agony
Her sole aim being to relieve his disease.
In the same way the Lord removes the pride
Of His servant for the servant's own welfare.
Shaking off all suspicions and doubts,
Tulsidas implores one to worship such a Lord.*

What is suffering? Suffering is a blessing in disguise. We are always afraid of suffering, and we do not want to suffer. However, suffering is a means of realizing and exterminating the evil karma. One should welcome it just as you welcome an operation when your appendix or any other organ is inflamed. There are people who do not like suffering; therefore they feel it more. There are those who enjoy suffering; thereby they are able to increase their tolerance and will.

Pain and suffering is a crucible into which nature throws a man whenever she wants to make him a sublime superman. Do you realize how much Christ or Mahatma Gandhi had to suffer? Sri Rama spent fourteen years in exile. There were only thorns in his life; the pain of exile was only one of them. So, if you suffer, you should always think that God is trying to awaken you from your stupor. As an Urdu poet explains:

*Every act of man is like that of a patient,
Whereas every act of God is like that of the physician.*

*That which you call affliction is His kindness
And that which you call hell is a place of transformation.*

You know what suffering is? God has never given me suffering in this lifetime, yet I tell people how to get rid of their pain. Even though I have never suffered from constipation, I tell people how to get rid of it.

Our children want to play all the time. How can we make them study?

Children need to play basketball, football, go fishing, swimming, skating, because sports are very good for them. Sports are more important than studies. A child who studies day and night becomes dull. If parents force their children to study all day, they will not remember anything. Whatever is taught in school is enough. Children do not need to study at home. To make children study at home as well as in school is a real headache, for the children as well as for the parents. The parents also get upset, because they have to chase the children all day in order to make them study.

It is equally important for children to play and to study. Playing is as important for a child as eating and sleeping. Playing increases the blood circulation which makes the body and mind healthier, and the eyesight stronger. Children should play. Cricket and football are good games. In a few years, games will become part of the school curriculum, like history and mathematics. Games will also become a subject, because games are more popular than studies. Today sportsmen travel all around the world. They become national champions; they receive national ratings and then international ratings. So games are not a waste of time.

In the morning children should do some physical exercises and study. During the day they should study in school. In the evening they should play, and at night they should talk. Two days a week they should have holidays, because study tires the mind. Modern educators are realizing the need to give more time and facilities to children for play. Until now, games were considered as entertainment only, but

soon they will be a credited subject in school. Imagine five to ten thousand children, watching games, clapping and enjoying themselves. When sports become an academic subject, children will be taught games and they will have to practise them, because they will be marked on their performance. It is also necessary to provide more facilities to rural children for both indoor and outdoor games. Play must never be discouraged, but neither should it be disorganized or indisciplined.

Many people feel that the Indian society is at a crossroads with mounting poverty, disease and family problems. What are your views on this situation?

People talk about love and compassion, but at a personal level nobody wants to share. If you want to share in the happiness of others, you must also be a partner to their problems and suffering. That is the measure of your love and compassion. There are millions of people around the world who are poor, unhappy and suffering. Even in Western countries, there are people who have no home, no employment, nowhere to go. In the streets of New York, Paris and Tokyo, you find many destitute people. That is physical unhappiness, physical suffering. If your heart is soft, you can feel the suffering and pain of others. As you go deeper in spiritual life, the closer you feel to mankind. Nothing is unattainable in this world for those who are willing to do good to others.

In the world today, there are very few people who are happy and prosperous. The majority of people are poor. Poverty is everywhere, not only in India, but in all parts of the world. European countries, which are considered to be highly developed, also have large numbers of destitute and unemployed people who have become criminals and frauds. In India, poverty is out in the open, in the streets, in full view. In other countries, poverty exists, but it is not visible, because the government gives a weekly stipend or dole to the unemployed, who manage to subsist on that. Poverty does not show as long as the government has enough money to hide it. Now, many governments are beginning to tighten up on social

welfare benefits. In a couple of years, when the dole stops, poverty in the West will also be out in the open, in the market and the streets.

There is a lot of disease in the West. India has many of these diseases also, but the countries which are considered to be medically and technologically advanced suffer from diseases of a type that science cannot understand or cure. Almost everybody in Western countries suffers from heart disease, nervous disease, cancer or diabetes. Now, there is a new disease called AIDS which is like an epidemic. People in many countries are dying by the thousands every day due to AIDS. There is no one to plough the fields or grow the vegetables. This disease is reaching the Eastern countries also, and there is no cure for it. Because the traditional codes of conduct regarding sexual behaviour are being neglected, AIDS is claiming more victims.

For the people of India, it is a blessing that this country was not rapidly industrialized, because that has kept the pollution level in the atmosphere low, although it has also meant a higher percentage of unemployment. Another blessing for India is that, irrespective of material status, the family system is still very strong. The husband has a hold over the wife, and the wife over the husband. The parents have a hold over the children, and the children over the parents. The family structure is well bonded.

In many other countries, this is not so. The wife has no hold over the husband, and the husband has no hold over the wife. The parents have no control over the children, and the children tell the parents to shut up. A society in which the children do not respect or listen to their parents cannot endure. Children are junior and parents senior, even though they may be wrong. When the children begin to override the parents, it is a sure indication that disintegration of the family system has set in.

That family in which the husband and wife regard each other with mistrust and misbehave with one another cannot stay together for long. It is our good fortune that here in India, the family structure is still intact. This is largely due to

the wisdom of the sadhus, mahatmas and sages. In places like America and Europe, people did not want the breakup of the family structure, but it happened by itself. We do not want the same thing to happen in India. As long as the family structure is intact, people will be content, even though they may be poor. If we go the Western way, we too will have to spend our later years in old age homes.

What happens when the family structure weakens?

You know quite well what happens when the family structure weakens. Think about it. What is the foundation of the family structure? What forms the nucleus of a family? Undoubtedly it is the husband and wife. They are not different entities; they are one. The right side of the family structure is the husband and the left the wife. You have heard about the concept of *ardhanarishwara*: half fair/half dark, half male/half female, half Shiva/half Shakti. It is the union of both aspects that makes a base for the family structure. If an imbalance is produced within this union, the family suffers.

Often the husband is responsible for marital conflict. Men should try to remove their weaknesses. Many men are in the habit of getting drunk and beating their wives. They become enraged over small issues, like the taste of the food. In a house where women are respected, all the devatas dwell. As it is said in *Manusmriti*: “God resides where women are respected and honoured.” If you respect someone, you accept their mistakes rather than flare up. If you respect me and I make a mistake, you accept it silently. Similarly, if a husband respects his wife and she makes a mistake, he must accept it without reacting.

The main point that I want to make is that no harm can come to this culture as long as the family structure remains strong. Nowadays our society is being faced with new situations. Men have to take up jobs in the cities, leaving the home and family behind. The children leave home at an early age and go to boarding schools. The home situation affects the children as well as the husband and wife. This has far reaching repercussions on the entire family.

In the modern world, how can we stay on the spiritual path?

India is a blessed country. Today most Indians are engaged in the race for material acquisition, and the pace of life has changed. Therefore, it is more important that at this time they must not forget the wisdom of their ancestors nor forsake the spiritual path. What is spiritual life? To go inward, towards the atma, spirit, is spirituality. To go outward, towards matter, is materialism. The jobs people do, the businesses they run, the entire lifestyle is all moving towards materialism. Although material needs must be met, you must not give up the spiritual path for want of time due to domestic or social engagements.

You should find time to do some spiritual sadhana daily, whether it is in the morning or at night. One sadhana should be chosen whether it is asana, pranayama, japa or chanting of Ramayana, because it is not possible to do all. Some people do pooja daily, some satsang, some swadhyaya. Choose one of these sadhanas and do it daily. As long as this spiritual tradition continues, no one can undermine your culture. Civilizations may come and go, one religion may replace another, political systems may change, but your culture will remain intact. As long as the people of this country tread the spiritual path, their culture will not be eroded.

Today people are looking towards spiritual life as a way to maintain balance. Large numbers come from the West to the ashrams in India, whether it be Aurobindo Ashram, Sivananda Ashram, Ramakrishna Mission or our ashrams. They come to learn japa, pooja, asana, pranayama, dhyana. Why do they do this? It is not because they are poor or hungry. They have money; not one of them goes to bed hungry, as it often happens in India. They come here because they are in turmoil. Why are they in turmoil? Because they have no family structure.

The father has divorced the mother and is now living with another woman. The mother has moved in with another man. Where will the children go? Being idealistic, children want to know about their roots, their family, their identity. Who is my father? Who is my mother? Children of ideal, knowledgeable and respectable parents automatically develop

a luminous character, because they are at peace; they do not suffer from deep insecurity and inferiority complexes. A child whose father is a drunkard, a gambler or a criminal will be full of complexes, which are bound to have a very strong effect on his mentality. It is these children who turn into juvenile delinquents and become involved in street violence and other crimes, which are very common today.

There are many people who come to India looking for answers, and we tell them exactly what I am telling you. Do not break the rules for momentary pleasure. What is the result? Adi Shankaracharya says:

*You lead a lustful life for pleasure
As a result you are diseased forever
Although death is the last recourse
Yet you are in the clutches of wicked acts.*

One who continually indulges in sensual pleasures becomes empty. Time is never ending, but we die. Desires do not wear out, but we become old.

*We do not enjoy the sense objects,
Rather we are devoured by them.
We do not burn our weaknesses by austerities,
Rather we are burnt out by them.
The time does not pass, rather we pass away.
Our greed never ages, but we grow older each day.*

In the words of a devotee:

*Life is futile, the world is hollow,
Only he survives who remembers God.
Everywhere in this world
All are subject to illusion,
All are selfish and by nature impure.
Love is futile, for there is no one loving,
Only he survives who remembers God.
By means of falsehood, cunning and illusion,
We erect here buildings for our own abode,
We accumulate much wealth only for ourselves.*

*Not an iota of love is to be found.
Although there is no end to our suffering,
Only he survives who remembers God.
Sensory pleasures and merrymaking
Are the nature of animals;
Such is the flow of the world's river,
There is none to be made a sharer.
Only he survives who remembers God.*

Do you like the Sanskrit language?

You should learn a lot of bhajans and kirtans. I like Sanskrit songs very much. I am primarily a Sanskrit speaking person. I speak Hindi and English just for the convenience of others. In my childhood I spoke only Sanskrit and did all my reading in Sanskrit. I like Sanskrit very much; it is our mother tongue. Hindi is our national language, and English is our business and professional language. We cannot manage without English, and everybody needs to know it, but our actual mother tongue is Sanskrit.

Sanskrit is a very simple language. It is simpler than Hindi and much simpler than English. English is neither systematic nor logical. 'Take' becomes 'took' and 'taken', but 'make' does not become 'mook' and 'maken'. The plural of 'fox' is 'foxes', but the plural of 'ox' is not 'oxes'. English grammar is totally arbitrary. I wonder how we learned it! Sanskrit is not like this; it is a very pure and systematic language. That is why it is called Sanskrit, 'well made': *sam* + *krit* = Sanskrit.

Sanskrit commands a high regard all over the world. Many people know this language in India, but they prefer to speak in English or Hindi. The chanting of vedic mantras is a yoga in itself, and there is a magical quality in it. Every mantra, whether Mahamrityunjaya mantra or Gayatri mantra, has a specific chanting notation. There are seven notes in the musical scale. Vedic chanting is done with three notes or *matras*: *udatta*, *anudatta* and *swarita*. *Udatta* is the low *matra*, *swarita* the middle and *anudatta* the high *matra*. The entire Veda: *Rigveda*, *Samaveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda* are

sung within these three notes, and all are sung differently. Generally, the pandits of North India have poor pronunciation of Sanskrit, but in Maharashtra and further down in South India, the pronunciation is perfect.

What practice do you recommend for the villagers?

Villagers should sing or listen to *Ramacharitamanas* daily. Don't tell me that you don't know how to read, because I am not asking you to read it. I am not even asking you to understand it. I am simply saying that *Ramacharitamanas* should be heard or sung daily in all village homes. That alone is sufficient.

Along with *Ramacharitamanas* you should also sing *Hanuman Chalisa*. Begin this tradition from today, if you do not already do it. Family members of all age groups, including and especially the children, should gather everyday and sing *Ramacharitamanas* together. Those who do not know the words or cannot read should just listen. It is so easy to sing *Ramayana*.

This practice will bring all kinds of peace, plenty, prosperity and auspiciousness to your homes: the happiness of having children as well as having food to feed them, the happiness of labouring at your fields and reaping a good harvest, of keeping disease and disharmony away from your home. What happiness does one enjoy in the family apart from these?

Tulsidas sings the glory of *Ramacharitamanas*:

*One who is specially gifted by God
Treads this path of devotion.
The desires of his soul are fulfilled.
One who sings the story of Rama without deceit
And those who recite, hear and assent to it,
Cross the worldly ocean as if it were
A small hole made by the foot of a cow.
Those who recite, hear and sing the story of Rama
Wipe out the stains of the kaliyuga
And the impurities of their souls.
Then they ascend, without effort, to His abode.*

How have the traditions been maintained in India?

The women of India have maintained these old traditions. Had it not been for them, our traditions would have been lost. They know how to run the family well and to lead a very harmonious and healthy life. They remember the entire yearly calendar of events. They know when it is Panchami, Chhat or Teej. The educated do not know all this. They have to ask the pandit when it is Ekadashi.

Psychologists have described women as being primarily discriminating. What do we mean by discriminating? Someone who can sort out the grit from the grain. Secondly, women have much more forbearance and fortitude, what is called *nigrah shakti*, than men. Men often let go of their principles, but women have more restraint. Thirdly, women have a greater capacity to bear pain and endure hardship than men. If men had to give birth to a child, they would surely die. In Rishikesh, I used to help in childbirth. During deliveries, the screams of the women used to shock me. That pain is no less than the pain of death. Some women go through it twenty or more times! These are some of the precious qualities in women and they should be carefully preserved.

The village women sing beautifully while they work. We used to have them over to grind grain. They would sing while grinding, and I used to encourage them. Apart from a few, most village women are totally illiterate, but they know all the dates, festivals, nakshatras and phases of the moon. I am not keen that these women should begin to study. Once they become educated, they will join the ranks of the unemployed. The government is happy to keep them this way, otherwise, the percentage of unemployed will double. Right now, these women are employed in the home. They are not in league with the unemployed of India. If they graduate, they will be unemployed and will become a problem for the government.

What are some of the important requirements of villagers?

One thing is very necessary in the villages; every household should have a cow. Even if it gives only one litre or half a litre of milk every day, the family can drink it. Meat cannot

be eaten every day, and it is good if people do not eat it at all. But milk is something they can take every day, as often as they want.

Another important requirement for the villages is small cottage industries for women. I have seen women producing articles for the market in Gujarat, Harayana and South India. There are hundreds of businesses they could start, like selling ground spices, pickles, papad. It should be an innovative idea, not bidi making.

I want them to produce things for the local market, not for the markets in Patna, Delhi or Kolkata. They should produce items that I could use, the Bihar School of Yoga could use, and the people in this vicinity could use. They should be able to produce different items, but their production should not involve the use of machines to a large extent.

Can they make incense sticks?

Yes, and thousands of other things. Now, these people should think about what has to be done. I will give them inspiration and they will listen to me. From what I have been saying, many women will begin to read *Ramacharitamanas*. I have told them from the very beginning to read *Ramacharitamanas* or *Hanuman Chalisa*. Normally, I do not meet them. It is only for the last four or five days that the censorship laws between them and me have become lenient. I will see them for another month and then take one year's leave. Meanwhile, I will continue to inspire them for undertaking these projects.

Woman is the central pivot of a family. If she is inspired, her family will follow suit. If the woman of the family wakes up, the entire family awakens. If the woman sleeps, whether the mother, wife or daughter, the entire family sleeps. It is the duty of men to pay as much attention to their daughters as to their sons. Women are one foot of society and men the other. If one foot is strong and the other is weak, the society will be lame. Tell me, isn't this a lame society at the moment?

Why do you remain under-cover?

I don't stay under-cover; I wear only a langoti!

I mean, why is it impossible to meet you?

If you remember, I met people until 1983. I lived a very public life, giving lectures, teaching and guiding people by the thousands. However, there is one basic principle in my life: I work according to the will of God, not by my own free will. When I was directed to leave Munger, I left that place, then I was ordered to come here. I heard the command; I saw the place, but I did not receive the go ahead signal straight away. Now, I have received the order that I am to stay here.

Another thing to remember is that a sadhu or a sannyasin cannot afford the lifestyle of a householder. We have to earn whatever we give you. You know very well what we earn: *tyaga*, sacrifice; *manobal*, willpower; *ekagrata*, one-pointedness and *bhakti*, surrender to the divine will. Where do you think we get our strength from? Not from money, qualifications or highly placed disciples. This strength is our own. The further we stay from the illusory world of *samsara*, *maya* and *moha*, delusion, the more our *atma* will remain in its pure form. Only then will there be wellbeing for humanity. Kabir has said:

*The world has gone so insane
That it does not understand the feeling of divine love.
Some implore God for progeny, some for grace,
Some for wealth and some for marriage.
There are no more customers for reality
They all want trash.
Kabir says: Pity the ignorant.*

I talk when I have orders to give, not otherwise. I do not like to meet people continually. After planting a sapling, do you constantly pull it out to check whether it has taken root? I have come here for solitude. I started my active life in 1931, at the age of eight, and completed it in 1983 at the age of sixty. I had more than fifty years of active life. Everyone, not only I, should retire after such a long period of active service. It is clearly specified that sannyasins who run institutions should disassociate themselves after their term of service and take *kshetra sannyasa*. Then they have to stay in solitude and refrain from meeting people, receiving *daan*, accepting

disciples and being guru. These rules have been made by our elders and we must follow them. Every field of life has its own set of regulations, then why not sannyasa?

My life has been an open book. It has hardly been a life in the conventional sense of the term. What else can you think about the life of a man who has never had a bank account and never signed a cheque! Such a life is totally open for anyone to see.

Like Buddha and Mahavira?

Buddha and Mahavira were *mahapurushas*, great souls, born as a part of God. They brought the divine power with them; I did not bring the divine power with me. I am generating and accumulating it. Had I been born out of the divine element, like Rama, Krishna and Buddha, I would have come into the world with divine power. I would not have needed to do sadhana. In order to make money, a businessman runs his business daily; a shopkeeper opens his shop daily, and a doctor sees his patients daily. If they did not perform their duties daily, how would they feed their families? In the same way, I have to sit regularly for my daily earnings, the accumulation of divine power. So, I do not have time for anything else.

In the life of the householder, due to maya and moha, there are many imaginary and self-created mistakes. When they go to a mahatma or guru, they go with the expectation of fulfilling certain desires. Due to the intensity of their feeling, some of them exert a force or attraction on the guru. By the force of their attraction, they pull a part of the guru's energy towards them, which they use for solving their problems. Thereafter, they find that all their difficulties have disappeared.

Most people are unhappy about one thing or another, be it money, lawsuit, daughter, or something else. When they draw upon the guru's energy, it disturbs the sadhana of the guru. These are internal experiences, therefore it is difficult to understand them. In the *Yoga Sutras* (3:38), Patanjali says that siddhis are blocks to the perfection of samadhi. *Samadhi* is 'union with the divine', when your mind is totally absorbed

in the divine. Samadhi requires total absorption in the divine. So, any transaction with the outside world precludes samadhi. Therefore, it is imperative to wear the spiritual armour and prevent this from happening.

There are spiritually powerful people, even among householders, who attract divine power, but because they have chosen to live in samsara with its maya-moha, they do not utilize that power very much. Take Draupadi, for example, what a position she was in! Many women have been similarly stripped and humiliated, but how many of them did the Lord save? He does not come to save everyone. He came to Draupadi's aid, because she was able to pull him, to attract his energy towards her. She could do that, because she had the power within herself. After all, she was the daughter of Agni; she was born out of fire. When the father and mother unite, the state of awareness within them at that time is transferred to the child, as a part of genetic transfer. We are all genetic transfers of our parents. The level of my parents' awareness, when they united for my conception, was transferred to me. Similarly, when Draupadi took birth she had that power with her. When she was being disrobed, her intense plea to God was such a compelling force that he had to come to save her. While praying she said:

*O Govinda, dweller of Dvaraka,
O Krishna, beloved of the Gopis,
Don't you, Keshava, see
That I am being dishonoured by the Kauravas?
O my Lord, the Lord of Lakshmi,
The Lord of Braj and destroyer of sorrows,
O Janardan, lift me up from sinking
In the ocean of cruelty of the Kauravas.
O Krishna, the great yogin,
The soul and beloved of the universe,
I seek Your shelter; protect me
From being tortured by the Kauravas.*

That is why sadhus and mahatmas are given freedom to gather people around them for a certain period of time. They

can train disciples, run institutions and hospitals, teach yoga, meet people, or have discussions for ten, twenty or fifty years. Then all of these activities must stop. You might have heard this song of Kabir:

*Be aware hereupon,
The holy guru has entrusted you
With a valuable treasure.
Protect it by all ways and means
It should not be diminished by one grain,
Rather it should be considerably increased daily.
Wearing a garment of forgiveness and modesty,
And a loin cloth of dexterity,
Be all the more active.
Wearing a cap of mercy on your head,
Do not be careless.
To possess the treasure
You must earn more and more daily.
Many thieves dwell hidden in this house.
Consider the body as a gun,
Wisdom as gun powder,
The trigger as love
And constant remembrance of the Lord
As gun cotton, always smouldering.
The guard on duty outside should be all the more vigilant.
Kabir is the orderly of the Lord
From the very beginning
With a stick in his hand.*

Remember God every day and do not lose this awareness, because thieves roam, not only outside, but inside the body also. Householders should attend marriages, engagements or parties, but they should observe these rules.

I have seen many beautiful places in the world, Mansarovar, Kailash and so on, but I like this place very much. The people here are very simple and innocent, but I cannot say whether this will be lost in the future. I like the atmosphere, aura and magnetic force that radiates from within the people who live here.

Why is Deoghar such a special place? Could it be because this region is the place of Lord Shiva?

I cannot say for sure. This is the cremation ground of Sati. Lord Shankara performed the last rites of Sati here and, at that time, he was demented with grief. Due to this incident, the area became a shaktipeetha and, therefore, the environment here is permeated with the shakti of Bhagavati. Perhaps this place is special because it is an important shaktipeetha as well as a seat for one of the twelve jyotirlingams of Lord Shiva.

I do not consider the poverty of this region to be a demerit. As I have said earlier, poverty exists worldwide. There is a majority of poor people all over the world; the rich are in a minority. I do not consider poverty a curse. Poverty is a curse when the poor walk the wrong path to get rid of their adversity.

God does everything in the world. Everything happens according to his wish.

I can understand this sentiment, but please remember that God has made every man free. He has given him a mind as well as viveka, the power of discrimination. Even the animals and birds know what is good or bad for them. Since God has given you the power to discriminate between right and wrong, you cannot transfer the entire blame to Him. You cannot accuse Him of forcing you to steal, rob and commit sinful deeds. He has given you viveka and you have disregarded it. So, you have to suffer the results of your misdeeds. You cannot say, “Look God, you made me do this; now, you should suffer the results.” The responsibility is yours, not His.

At the time of creation, He made the rules and filled every being with viveka. Every sentient and insentient being has viveka. Every mineral has viveka. If you put sodium in water, it begins to react and emit smoke. If you expose phosphorus to air, it begins to burn. Is this not a measure of viveka in the mineral? The knowledge of what is good and what is bad for oneself is present even in a dog. Birds never freeze in winter, because they know when it starts getting cold, it is time to move to a warmer climate. Despite being endowed

with this quality of viveka, man chooses not to follow it. So, he has nobody to blame but himself. Do not blame God for the karma you have created. You make your karma and you must also suffer the consequences of it yourself.

What is the origin of a misdirected intellect, or buddhi, and how can one give it proper direction?

Lord Krishna has said in the *Bhagavad Gita*, “When a man thinks of the objects, attachment for them arises; from attachment, desire is born; from desire, anger arises. From anger comes delusion; from delusion, loss of memory; from loss of memory, the destruction of discrimination; from the destruction of discrimination, he perishes.” (2:62–63)

There are many origins. The first is society, the family and the parents. The act of procreation through the union of the father and mother is a fantastic and awesome event. One small cell turns into a magnificent human being. Just the mind itself is a wonderful creation. Consider the great minds of Gandhi, Newton, Einstein, Rama, Krishna and Bhimsen. Now, we use this act of procreation for *bhoga*, pleasure. The child is a mere biological accident in most cases. This is the depth to which man has fallen.

Every action has three objectives: production, perfection and pleasure. For achieving perfection, man should do sadhana. Sadhana has only one meaning; it is not ambiguous. The minds of men are perpetually vacillating. If you were asked to have just one thought in your mind, would you find it possible? Your mind jumps like a monkey from thought to thought. You have to get rid of this tendency and fix your mind at one point for five minutes. You can achieve this with the help of mantra, pranayama, or by Kabir’s method of shabda yoga. The choice is yours. Concentration is necessary to remove mental dissipation. The mind has to be fixed at one point, not two. To accomplish this, the *Bhagavad Gita* advocates the path of karma yoga. Raja yoga is another path.

Satsang 2

November 17, 1994, Afternoon

What is vipassana sadhana?

Vipassana is a meditation practice propagated by Lord Buddha. Nowadays, it is used for calming the mind and nerves and removing stress. In this era, most people are not interested in dharma and moksha. Of the four *purusharthas*, aims to be fulfilled in life, now only two are fulfilled: *artha*, material need, and *kama*, emotional need. When you go into artha and kama without the balancing effect of *dharma*, higher duty, and *moksha*, freedom, you will have mental tensions, worries, feelings of insecurity and fear. The mind will be troubled, full of passion, anger, remorse and regret. Practices like vipassana can be used to keep the mind calm and balanced.

Can techniques like vipassana help to stabilize a marital relationship?

In all relationships, there are feelings of insecurity and fear. The mind becomes dissipated, filled with anger, passion and guilt. One moment you are fighting and the next you are friendly again. In the evening you quarrel, and by morning you are friends. You say, “Sorry”, and it is over, but all this creates tension. When you come to a really hot point, you have a shower, then you feel better. Similarly, at times of tension, you can do vipassana.

Can one advance through vipassana?

No, forget about climbing up. It is not necessary to advance at this point. There is a way, but until you finish your trip here, how can you go up? The mala moves in the hand, the tongue moves in the mouth, the mind roams in ten directions. This, indeed, is not remembrance of the Lord. You tend to forget this. The mind is restless and you want to focus it. But what do you do? You light a lamp in the room and open up the doors and windows. So, the lamp flickers, extinguishes, and you go on striking the matchsticks. You do not want to shut the windows, but you want the lamp to be steady. Similarly, in order to calm the mind, you have to close the windows. This may seem difficult, but until it is done, do not talk about going 'up there'. This point has been explained very beautifully in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*The constant awareness that 'I am That'
Is the lamp's most brilliant flame.
When the bliss of self-realization sheds its bright lustre
The delusion of duality,
The root of worldly existence, is dispelled.
The deep darkness of lost moha and tamas,
The whole family of powerful avidya, disappears.
When the light of self-realization is gained thus,
The intellect rests in the chamber of the heart,
Untying the knot of ignorance.
If that knot of ignorance is untied,
Then the jivatma is fulfilled.
But, O King of birds,
When illusion finds that the knot is about to be untied,
She creates different kinds of hindrances.
O brother, she sends much prosperity and perfection
That tempts the intellect towards greed.
Artifice, force or fraud go near and put out the light
With the wind of their garments.
If the intellect is careful enough,
She will not allow them
To execute their harmful intentions.*

*If these hindrances fail to distract the intellect,
Then the senses proceed to create trouble.
The doors of the senses
Are like portals to the heart
Where gods have made their seats.
Whenever they see a gust of sensuality approaching,
They obstinately throw open the doors.
As soon as that strong gust of wind
Enters the chamber of the heart
It forthwith extinguishes the lamp of wisdom.*

Yoga means to calm the restless mind, and yoga also means the techniques which calm the mind: raja yoga, hatha yoga, etc. When the restless mind is quietened, then it is said that yoga has been achieved. So, yoga is a practice and an attainment too. It is very difficult to talk about it. I tell everyone that first it is necessary to sort out artha and kama. King Janaka was liberated though he lived amongst passions. He had immense properties and wealth, position and power. He had everything, but he was calm.

There have been many such people who have lived a disciplined life and still followed the path of purushartha, or self-effort, while living in the world. They have done their duties, worked hard, but, in the midst of all, they were able to remain very calm. I saw Gandhiji during my youth. Even in old age, he had surprising purushartha. He was always calm and quiet despite the political upheavals, clashes, killings and robberies. So, a person, who can keep himself calm in the midst of money and passion, is worthy of praise. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (2:71), Lord Krishna says, "That man who renounces all desires, gives up all ties, and becomes egoless and detached, achieves tranquillity of mind, even while performing action."

Just as all rivers flow into the sea and lose their individual existence at that point, in the same way, let all of your desires and fantasies flow, then anchor them at the point where they cease flowing. That central point has to be located, then you move beyond vipassana or you will remain stuck there.

How can mouna succeed in the grihastha, household, environment and how is it possible to maintain it there?

When you play a transistor for twenty-four hours will the battery go flat, or not? If you switch it off, the battery will last longer. That is the importance of mouna. In speaking, listening, thinking, walking, I am using up the battery. Our battery is pranic energy. That pranic energy is used up quickly in talking, in worrying, in passions. This pranic energy that is spent on all of our activities should be conserved. Conservation of prana is the solution to our energy crisis. If you can stay silent for some time, then the mental energy is conserved. Shekh Farid has said:

*You deal in soap but talk fragrantly like musk.
By using the soap outwardly,
The inner self does not get cleansed.*

Bholenath's Readymade Store

Bholenath is my dog. We have opened a readymade store in his name. The people in the neighbouring villages respect him very much. They send prasad for Bholenath whenever there is a pooja at their place. They call out to Bholenath from the trees, but nobody dares to come closer. In the Bholenath Readymade Store, we have many toys and games for children such as ludo, snakes and ladders, and for the bigger kids, footballs and cricket bats. For the girls we have a *suhaag*, auspicious, corner. Sannyasins do not provide any cooperation during marriage and last rites; that is a rule. However, before the young bride goes on dwiragaman, she comes here. The girls get married very young, at the age of fourteen or fifteen. After marriage, when the young girl goes to her bridegroom's house for the second time, she comes here and we give her a sari, mangalsutra, bangles, odhani and anklets for the feet.

People have now begun giving ornaments also, such as noserings and earrings. Recently, somebody sent a silver necklace which was thick and heavy. Because of that offering, my karma of many lifetimes will be washed away. Otherwise, I

may have to marry in my next birth; I shall have to marry off daughters. That is why I am working it through now, which is better. This is the spirit. Girls who sing well are also given tape recorders and cassettes. There is nothing in it for me. I ask the people to give, and the things which they offer are distributed. As a sannyasin, I have to beg, but why beg for myself? I have begged for two rotis and two langotis for myself, but for others, I can ask for anything.

Swami Janakananda who came from Denmark said, “I shall give a cow.” Denmark is a land of dairy cows, so he has offered to donate a cow. Swami Niranjan has just come back from Europe today. He has brought the message of animal donations. Village people need domesticated animals. They keep sheep, not for food, but for wool. They keep hens for eggs. So, I have received this suggestion from them, that I should give animal donations also, and it is a very good thing. This is a vedic tradition. If someone dies, then we donate cows. I will donate cows, assuming that I am dying and I shall die many times.

Kabir has said:

*That which has risen will set,
That which has blossomed will wither,
That which has been built will surely fall,
He who has come to this world will depart.*

How do you deal with rural ailments?

We do not have many diseases like the people have in big cities. I am shocked at the ailments I hear about in places like England, America and Germany: AIDS, heart problems, nervous diseases. In the villages, some suffer from stomach and skin disorders, TB and malnutrition. Villagers have rural ailments which do not involve expensive treatments. If an old man goes blind, what can be done? If it were a small child, we could send him to Kolkata, Munger or elsewhere. In most cases, however, these people do not need outside treatment and, if it is offered to them, they refuse it.

How is Sivananda Math helping the local people?

Many jobs are provided for the working class people of nearby villages by Sivananda Math. They break stones, earning twenty rupees a day. Whatever construction work you see here has all been done by the villagers who live within two or three kilometres from here. For generator or electrical work, we call Babu next door. He gives us a connection; he installed the transformer. Our technicians are all from nearby villages, and they are artists. If the motor stops working, we send it to the contractor. He gets motor winding done and sends it back. We do not even need to go to Deoghar. Whenever we need to buy anything from the market, we simply make a call, and they send it. We use whatever is needed; they take back the rest, and then they bill us. Whatever is required, they send it. Does that happen in other places? No, there is supply only on prepayment.

How will we be able to solve the social problems in India?

If every Indian decides to make one family self-dependent, then, I think, the problem of India will be solved. This problem cannot be solved by the government. I have been observing this for forty to fifty years. This can be done only by us. When one rich man goes to a hill station, he spends forty to fifty thousand rupees. If he decides not to go to a hill station one year, what's the problem?

Every year, on the 8th September, my guru Swami Sivananda's birthday, I help one man start an enterprise. It does not take much, only four or five thousand rupees, to start a small village shop and stock it with things which people use: biscuits, detergent, pens, pencils, clips, notebooks. The shopkeeper purchases things from the town for the village; he makes a commission and those things become more easily available in the villages. This is a good approach. Bhartrihari has said: "Charity, enjoyment and destruction are the three channels of wealth. To the one who neither gives nor enjoys, the third will inevitably happen."

We get all the things which we need from the nearby shop, and the shopkeeper earns five or ten percent. All the things

are available from here, so why go far? In this way, if each person with means makes a few compromises in his luxury expenditure, we ourselves can solve the social problem of India, which the government has been unable to do.

Why is there so much poverty in the East and not in the West?

Do not say that there is poverty here and not there. There are as many poor people in the West as here. The difference is that some countries cannot take care of the poor because the government has no funds for that purpose. Other countries keep their poverty hidden for political reasons by giving unemployment benefits. How do Western countries earn their money? By *adharma*, unrighteousness. They create wars and sell armaments to terrorists. There, business interactions are undertaken by the private sectors, so the government is not directly involved. Each missile is very expensive, and from this business, they all earn a lot of money. Some of the money which is earned in this way is distributed to the poor as unemployment benefits.

So, people keep quiet, and continue voting for the same government. If some day, for some reason, this system comes to a halt, then you will see poverty out on the streets. Poverty exists everywhere in the world. It is not that India is such a poor country, but the poverty can be seen here. The poverty of Western countries cannot be seen. In the streets of New York, outside the shops, people keep large corrugated boxes in which things are packed and transported. At night, they spread newspaper on the bottom, cover it with plastic and go to sleep inside. Earlier, police used to hound these people and put them in jail for vagrancy, but now there are so many, there is no place to keep them.

I have often been confronted by such questions: Why is there so much poverty in India? I replied, "Poverty in my country is visible, but in your country poverty is not visible." Unemployment in this country is actually lower than in other countries. Unemployment abroad is high. In our country, women are not educated, but they are self-employed at home.

Their names are not listed in the unemployment exchange. Soon, however, they are going to pass with BA's and go looking for jobs, then the number of unemployed will increase.

A change of view about India is needed. The conditions in which the people of this country have survived, nobody else could have survived. Go and look in the villages. See how they live altogether in small rooms! They have a lot of stamina, strong immune systems, immunity to disease. See the dirty water they drink, and still they manage.

What is a computer mind?

There are two aspects of mind, mechanical and intellectual. The mechanical aspect works automatically. Whatever you say gets imprinted on the mind. Now I am speaking and even the dog must be registering it. The people who cannot understand my speech must still be registering the sound. Superior to this aspect is intellect, which the mechanical computer does not have in itself. Intellect, or *viveka*, programs the mechanical aspect of the mind. When the programming is complete, intellect, the operator, which is not visible from outside, may be wiped off.

Any thought, any incident, any experience that comes within the perception of the senses, gets registered by the mechanical aspect of the mind. For example, suppose I am watching you from here. The angle of my vision is such that even though a broken egg lying in my visual path may not be observed by me, still the imprint would fall on my eyes and be registered by the brain. Anything the eyes see, even if we are not aware of it, gets registered. There is an aspect of the mind which registers the environment also. Good and bad environment, good and bad company, likes and dislikes, all of these are registered, and after some time they are transferred, just as entries into the computer are transferred to a disc.

After input, you can either get a printout or transfer the information to a disc. In the same way, after the impressions are registered, they are transferred to the subtle body as *samskaras*, and this is the source of secret knowledge. Then this profile appears in the second computer. You don't know

it, but the profile disc that you have carried on from your previous births is showing the effects. Your life, beliefs, destiny, pleasure and pain, abilities and disabilities, all these are determined by that. As is the seed, so is the harvest.

The foundation of the world is based on action and discipline. Does sannyasa or grihastha ashrama have any role to play?

Three influences affect the karma. First is the influence of previous births. Second is genetic transfer, the result of a meeting between father and mother, which nowadays in the language of modern science is called genetic transfer. Third is environment and personal associations, which are external and can be seen. The combination of these three creates the actions, thoughts, progress, success or failure of man. For example, a seed of coriander has its own particular genetic potential. If this coriander seed is sown at the right time, in the right place, and proper care is taken, then you will get good coriander. However, if the coriander seed is good, but the soil is poor, and you do not give sufficient water, then although the seed was good, the plant becomes weak.

In the same way, the disc which you have carried from previous births affects your karma. During genetic transfer, the life giving cells of the parents, in the form of sperm and ovum, also affect the karmas. Now how far are they affected? Scientists say that genetic transfer is responsible for sickness; it also affects the shape of the body, such as the eyes. Some have eyes like the father and some like the mother. However, there is a limit to the influence of genetic transfer on karma. How far the actions of previous lives can affect the karma also has a limit. The most important influence on karma is through associations, good or bad company. While emphasizing this point in *Ramacharitamanas*, Tulsidas says:

These are the effects of satsang.

No other way is available in the world or in the Vedas.

Without satsang discrimination cannot be attained.

That too is not possible

Without the grace of Rama.

*Satsang is the root of blissful wellbeing.
That is the perfection of all fruits,
The flower of all means.
Even wicked people are reformed by satsang,
In the same way that iron is transformed into gold
By the philosopher's stone.*

Satsang is the origin of bliss. A ruffian or a tyrant can improve with the company of the wise. A wicked man can also improve with satsang. Suppose someone had a bad previous birth, or his parents did not give him the right training. Through contact with good company, he can improve. Through bad associations, children of very good families can be spoiled. The company that you keep depends on the environment. You go to school or college, read books, watch films, sing songs; all these are also associations. Anything that you interact with in your life is a form of association. Rishi Muni has said: "Just as a drop of water shines on a lotus leaf, thus is the glory of positive associations."

You can see the second virtue of good company for yourself. What is a *conch*? It is an animal bone, but since it is in God's hand, so even brahmins raise it to their lips. Tell me, would you touch a piece of animal bone to your lips? It is said that the conch stayed in the hands of Narayan for a long time and the result was that we have to bow our heads to that piece of bone. By the power of positive association, Ravana also became the devotee of Rama at the time of his death. So Tulsidas says:

*If all the happiness of the heavens, and ultimate bliss
Are placed on one side of the balance,
Then taken together they cannot measure
The happiness obtained from one iota of satsang.*

What is the attention span of the mind?

It is a fact that the mind is like a computer and all the abilities are within the mind. If a computer that could perform all the functions of the mind could be made, it would not be small; it

would cover thousands of square kilometres. There is another possibility: perhaps ten thousand telephone numbers could be stored in its memory. About fifty years back, a saint came to my guru's ashram. He made one hundred men stand in front of him and speak a few words at the same time. When all of them were finished, the saint began to repeat what each one had said.

Such a mind that can be attentive to one hundred things at a time is called *shatavadhan*. The word *savdhan* means 'attention'. *Shatavadhan* means 'one hundred attentions'. I was called *ashtavadhan*, 'eight attentions', because I used to be talking on the phone, writing articles, checking files, reading books at the same time. My guru used to say that I could do four to five things at a time. These are the possibilities of a computer mind.

However, one thing must be remembered. Sometimes the computer program gets a virus, which impedes the system and has to be wiped out. In the same way, the mind also gets cobwebs. Most people have very limited mental capacity. Their minds are not expansive and they cannot think much. Their abilities are few, and the cause of this is society. If the same person was born in another society, he would have been an achiever. The boys and girls here cannot go anywhere without guardians. The women folk cannot go anywhere unaccompanied. Here, it is considered very risky, but abroad women travel about freely. They even tour Arabian countries. Actually people create fearful and inhibiting social concepts, which in turn limit the mind and mental abilities. Culture is different to society. Culture is the basis of society. It is culture that creates society, and that culture which can remain for thousands of years is a special one.

How can that God who is spoken of in the scriptures be realized?

You ask about what is written in the books. I speak about what I have seen and experienced. All the scholars who debated on this topic have relied only on speculation. Conjectured proofs were the basis of their speech. If there is no truth behind it,

where is the need to debate? Even if I want to realize God, what difference does such talk make? The way to know God is through worship, veneration and meditation. You ask, "What is God? Who is He?" There is so much speculation going on about it, but it has no worth for an aspirant.

In the scriptures, God is described as formless, without beginning or end. It is said that we are all parts of Him, created by Him in His image. But there is always some controversy about whether He is within us or not; whether we are His finite or infinite part. Whether we are His children or whether nature has created us, and God has nothing to do with it. Reading all these ideas, my hair turned grey. In the end I realized only one thing, and that too I have read in *Ramacharitamanas*.

Whatever amount of yoga you do, shastras you read, oblations you offer, austerities you perform, whatever you may do, God cannot be realized through that. The basis of God realization is love and devotion, just as you love your wife, you love your child or you love your property. You think about your enemy and you wish for revenge at such depth that his impression stays with the mind always; you never lose track of him. If a loved one falls sick in the house, you go on thinking about that person even while you are eating or travelling. If you have the same sentiments for God, even God appears in any form, because he is formless. Tulsidas has described this point in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*As a woman is dear to a lustful man
And as wealth is dear to a greedy person,
Let Rama, the stalwart of Raghukula,
Be forever dear to me.*

I do not know any of his forms. Some have said that God appears in the form of Rama, some said Shiva, some said Hanuman, and some said Kali. Everyone visualized in the person of the Lord the reflection of his own emotional disposition. Therefore, as Surdas has said in one of his songs:

*Leaving others, remember the name of Nandkumar.
By remembering others, nothing is gained,*

*The entanglement of the world is not untied.
 In whatever lives you were born,
 You gathered much weight from sinful deeds.
 To cut away all that, the sharp axe
 Of the name of Hari is quite strong.
 This is the essence of the Vedas, Puranas,
 Bhagavata and Gita.
 No one can cross the ocean of the world
 Without the help of the boat shaped by the feet of Hari.
 Knowing this, start remembering
 The Lord this very moment,
 Because the time is passing without any gain.
 Surdas says: take advantage of all opportunities now,
 Because human incarnation is difficult to obtain.*

All spoke of form, whether one form or another. How do I know whether these forms are correct or incorrect? It is only a speculation. This is what I have understood after reading *Ramacharitamanas*. If you want to know God, leave everything, sing His praises, stop all sadhanas and develop a relationship of love with God. You can develop the relationship to God as father, and love Him as you would love a father. You can relate to God as your son and love Him as Kaushalya loved Rama. You can relate to God as your beloved and love Him as Radha loved Krishna. You can even relate to God as your enemy and hate Him as Ravana hated Rama; day and night he could think of nothing but Rama.

*Whether one respects the name
 In love or humility,
 In anger or apathy,
 It brings auspiciousness from all directions.*

Do time and creation have any beginning or end?

Sometimes I wonder whether this creation is a dream or a reality. If it is real, then it is eternal. If it is eternal, then it is very difficult to know about the beginning or the end of it. Years ago, I used to think, when was this creation made, one

or two million years back? Time must have existed before that also. Even twenty billion years back, time must have existed then too. Time is infinite. How far back can one go? If time is infinite, then it is a continuous circle.

Satsang 3

November 18, 1994, Morning

Why are you starting a yoga university in Bihar?

Bihar School of Yoga is now graduating into a yoga university. In 1965, when I began the work, people tried to obstruct me in many challenging ways, but I came through with flying colours. Bihar has a very ancient tradition. Lord Buddha was born here, Mahavir was born here, King Janaka and Devi Sita were born here. Great scholars and eminent jurists were born here. Indian culture and logic were all born here.

Many eminent people have been born in Bihar, one of whom was Vidyapati. There is a story that Lord Shankara used to stay in the house of Vidyapati in the guise of the servant Ugna, pounding rice and performing all the household chores. Once Vidyapati went on a pilgrimage with Ugna. On the way, he felt thirsty, so he asked Ugna to bring some water. In the dense, lonely forest, there was no well or pond. After some time Ugna returned with a pot of water. When Vidyapati drank the water, he felt that it was pure Ganga water. He caught hold of Ugna and asked, "Who are you? Tell me."

Then Lord Shankara appeared to Vidyapati in his true form and said, "Do not tell this secret to anyone. The day you expose my real nature, I shall leave you." One day Vidyapati's wife lost her temper and slandered Ugna. Upon hearing this, Vidyapati could not hold himself back and he cried out, "What are you doing! He is Lord Shiva himself." The same moment, Ugna disappeared, and Vidyapati's sorrow knew no bounds. He lamented:

*O my Ugna, where have you gone?
O Shiva, where have you gone?
What has become of you?
There was no bhang in your bag,
So you were displeased.
If I bring it after searching,
Will you laugh?
If anyone tells me where he is,
I will offer him a golden bangle as a prize.
Lord Shiva met Parvati in Nandanvan,
Parvati was therefore very pleased,
Her sorrow was no more.
Poet Vidyapati says he is interested in Ugna alone,
Even the kingdom of the three worlds
Is not so valuable to him.*

Lord Buddha's birthplace was Kapilavastu which is in Uttar Pradesh at the foothills of Nepal. After renouncing his kingdom and title, he took shelter at the feet of his guru near Gaya in Bihar. He learned Samkhya and Vedanta from him, but he considered all this as book knowledge which ultimately could be of no use to him for the realization of truth. So, he started his austerities, taking a vow of silence, fasting and performing panchagni.

One day while going for a bath, he fell into the pond and couldn't get up. A young maiden who was walking there happened to find him in this pitiable condition and revived him with a bowl of milk rice. After this, he was able to sit for meditation, and at that time he experienced illumination.

Buddha lived and taught in Bihar most of his life. Sarnath was the only place he went to outside Bihar. When he realized the truth, he went to Sarnath and preached his first sermon there. The rest of his life, he moved around Bihar, staying sometimes in Rajgir, Patna, Munger, Samastipur, Vaishali, Muzaffarpur and around these places.

And Swami Vivekananda?

Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda were from Bengal. Many great poets, politicians and patriots such as Rabindranath Tagore, Vamakheda and others were born in Bengal. Have you heard the poem of Rabindranath Tagore called *Save Me from Adversity*?

*O Lord, 'protect me from calamities' –
I have not come to Your door with this prayer.
'I should not be afraid of calamities' –
Give me this boon.
I do not beg you to console my agonizing mind.
Bless me to be victorious over suffering,
This is my prayer.
If I could not obtain Your help,
Then also grant me the boon
That I do not become weak by accepting
The inferiority, fear and deception of the world,
Which have become my share.
In spite of that, my innermost core
Is not destroyed by these blows.
'Save me' – I have not come with this prayer.
I want the courage to swim through the ocean of distress.
'Lessen my burden', I do not want this consolation.
'I may go on with this burden' –
This is my prayer.
In the moment of adversity,
Bowing my head down,
I may have Your darshan.
But in distressful nights,
When the whole world laughs at me,
'I should not feel weak' –
Grant me this boon.*

Uttar Pradesh, where Lord Rama and Lord Krishna were born, is a land of seers and peers, of courageous warriors. The people of Madhya Pradesh are very devoted and say “Hari, Hari” for everything and see God in everyone. I have seen many mahatmas amongst them also, but I still chose Bihar.

Is there any special diet which is taken here?

There are many people here who live on curd, flat rice and pera. It is very good food for this season and it is good for blood pressure also, as curd reduces cholesterol. Pera is a sweet which is also prepared from milk.

Are there any places which we should see in Deoghar?

Yes, while you are here, you certainly must have darshan of Baidyanath Dham, which is a very ancient Shiva temple. Everyone can go to the temple; there is no discrimination. People of all sections: Hindus, Christians, Muslims, can go there. During the monsoons, thirty lakh of pilgrims come for darshan. Both king and subject, rich and poor alike, walk one hundred kilometres, carrying a pot of Ganga water from Sultanganj on their shoulders. At Sultanganj, the Ganga reverses and flows north, like in Munger, so this is an auspicious place. This is an old tradition.

Deoghar is a land of Santhalis. Just as there are different tribes in Madhya Pradesh, similarly, the native tribe here is Santhali. The Santhalis are simple and nice people. They have a great culture, greater than ours. Their king wasn't a Santhali; he was a follower of vedic religion, like Rama, Krishna, Harish Chandra and others. This is a Santhali temple, but the Ganga water is brought from Sultanganj, which is outside the Santhali jurisdiction. This is regarded as a symbol of unity, because Sultanganj falls within the territory of Anga. People bring Ganga water from there and offer it here. The priests here come from Mithila. All this is a symbol of unity, what you call equanimity.

When Lord Shiva was crestfallen at the death of Sati, he began wandering from place to place, carrying her dead body. As he moved about, the different parts began to drop away. In one place her hands fell, in another her legs, somewhere else her eyes. In the end, only her chest, where the heart is located, remained with him, and this was cremated by the people here. That is why this place is also called the cremation ground of Sati, and is venerated as one of the sixty-four shaktipeethas.

What made you decide to come here?

I did not choose this place. God has given me this place. I had never thought of this place. This place is very near to Munger. I know many people here. I didn't like this place because it was very near to Munger; I wanted to go away from Munger where they would not even get the faintest whiff of my scent.

Before coming here, when I was at Trayambakeshwar, I could not decide where to stay. I had many options: one was Gurushikhar at Mount Abu, another was at Gangotri, where I was offered a cave. The swamis at my guru ashram also offered to keep me with them. Many people invited me, but I was unable to decide where I should go. So, on the 8th September, I heard the command, "Go to my cremation ground." According to the scriptures, Deoghar is the cremation ground. This is the second tantric seat after Kamakhya, which is located in Guwahati, Assam. They used to call it Kamaroopa's magic, where men were turned into sheep, but not anymore. Now men have turned into sheep anyway; it is not a big thing.

I had the vision of this place. Then I told the swami who came to see me, "Look, this is the place and it is in this village." So, I was actually sent here; I did not come by choice. Not only in the path of sadhana, but in life also, man has no choices. Whatever options you have are only for pacifying the ego: I want this, but I don't want that. But the tendency of man to surrender is his real trait. When you have loaded your luggage onto the trekker, then you do not need to carry it.

*I have entrusted all the responsibilities
Of my life to You.
O Lord, now my upliftment or downfall
Is in Your hands.*

This sentiment of surrender is the optionless state, the desireless state. So, I did not leave the ashram and decide to come here by my own choice, nor am I doing anything by my own desire. I have only to say:

*O Lord, let Your wish prevail
And let You be all in all.
As long as there is life and blood in the veins,
Let Your Self be the subject matter of my speech
And let the search for You be the goal of my life.*

I never made the ashram because of personal desires. Why should I want an ashram, when I was king in my guru's ashram? I did not have any desire for leadership; that is why I left the Rishikesh ashram where I am from. Even today, if I go there, people collect to pay their respects and say, "Swamiji come and stay here." So, whatever God wills, he does. Even if I do not want it, He gets it done for our good, and it is we who benefit. In this regard, Kabir has said:

*The Lord who gave your body a shape
Out of the watery semen and ovum,
Created ears, hands, feet, tongue, mouth and prana,
And kept you alive in the womb
With the head down and the feet up for nine months.
In such a fire which consumes grain,
You remained untouched.
He did not keep you hungry
In that furious fire.
Kabir says that kind hearted Krishna nourishes us all.*

When a man makes a mistake, is God still the doer?

If you or I commit a mistake, it is easy to say that God is the doer. However, when someone creates problems and harasses you, then you do not say that God is the doer. Only when you commit an offence or a sin, then God is the doer. Usually it is easy to say that God is doing it through me; He is using me as a medium. However, when sorrows befall me and the moment of testing arises, even then I must say that God is doing it. If you can accept this also, then only shall I accept that you have committed a mistake by God's will. Do not have dualistic thoughts about the acts of God. There must be one general philosophy which is applicable to all.

An Urdu poet has said:

*If the Lord desired, I prostrated myself.
If he removed me from household duties,
I sat there abandoning all.
To whichever side He turned me, I sat there refraining.
If a rag was prepared, I sat down wearing it.
If favoured with a shawl, I was pleased with it.
Only those people are perfect
Who rejoice in every state of life.*

You should not think that it is God's doing when it is convenient, and your own doing when it is inconvenient. Then it is better to say that I am the doer, I committed the mistake, I committed the sin. I am paying for the mistake I made; I am enjoying the wealth I collected. I am a great scholar due to the knowledge I have gained. Credit it all to yourself or to Him. When you want to be responsible, you leave it on yourself, and when you do not want to be responsible, you leave it on Him. This is not the way. Bahadur Shah Jafar says:

*Jafar says a person should not be considered a human being,
However dutiful he might be,
Who does not remember God in prosperity
And is not afraid of Him when angry.*

When one wishes to repent, must one leave it on God also?

Repentance is a psychological process. If this process can change your life, then its purpose is served and it is applicable. However, if this process remains psychological, then what is the use of it? A drunkard repents every morning when he wakes up, and drinks again in the evening. This kind of repentance won't work. What is the meaning of repentance? Is it the feeling of having sinned? If the process of repentance does not reform us, then psychology says it becomes a form of suppression.

If a person wants to reform himself, then he must have strong willpower. In order to strengthen the willpower, he has

to make a vow. He can make a simple, small vow that every morning he will get up early, have a bath and chant Gayatri mantra a specific number of times. Then, irrespective of his work load, he must do it daily. If the mind is disturbed, still he must do it; if his faith in the vow dwindles, even then he must do it. The important thing is to do it and do it and do it. The vow that you make is a form of will; it is a strong decision, a small oath. You must have studied the principle of crystallization in primary science. If you hang a small crystal, after some time you will see that small crystal particles kept nearby are drawn to it, until in the end such a large crystal is formed that it falls off.

In the beginning make a small decision, primary class level. Getting up at four in the morning is a small vow. There are thousands of vows, big and small both. Celibacy is a big vow; sitting in the middle of five fires is a big vow; sannayasa is a big vow. I am talking about small vows here, not big vows. Supposing you have vowed to get up at four am. Even if your health is suffering, you have a cough and cold, and you are unable to do anything else, still you must get up at four am. You have taken a vow, so you must definitely do it. You did not say, "I will get up at four, take a bath and do so many rounds of japa." You only said, "I will get up at four," and this does not mean lying in bed wrapped with blankets.

In the same way, you can make a vow to fast on Ekadashi, or whatever vow is suitable for you, and then follow it with regularity. This way the willpower becomes strong and the mind becomes disciplined. When your mind is strong, you will have no need to repent. Your bad habits will change without repentance. Everybody repents, gamblers and drunkards also repent, but it has no effect, because of the weak mind. Tulsidas says:

*O my Lord, my mind does not leave its stubbornness.
I teach it so many ways every day
Still it always behaves according to its nature.
Just as a lady experiencing horrible agony during childbirth
Forgets it afterwards*

*And again enjoys the company of her husband,
Likewise the mind, being greedy, roams like an animal.
Though horribly beaten, still that same mind treads the path
And foolish as it is, it never is ashamed.
I am tired of applying different methods,
It proves too strong to be controlled.
Tulsidas says that it will be under control
Only when God, the motivator, will restrain it.*

A child of one year wants to stand up, but is unable to because the legs are weak. When the mind is weak, the same thing happens. What does weakness mean? With a small push, one falls; with a little exertion, one starts breathing heavily; from a bit of rich food, one gets dysentery. Such people can't walk far on foot. This is physical weakness. What are the symptoms of mental weakness? One thinks too much and gets blood pressure. When there is tension, one loses one's temper and becomes angry. This is a weak mind. One has positive ideas, but is unable to implement them. One knows what is dharma, what is adharma, what is right and what is wrong, but the tendency is not to follow it. One knows what one's responsibilities are, but neglects them; one knows that one is irresponsible, but is unable to stabilize oneself. Because the mind is weak, one is attached to wrong actions and is unable to turn the mind away from them. A weak mind is unable to do what it wants to do. You know what has to be done to make the body strong: go for walks, eat properly, exercise, participate in sports, practise yoga.

What is the easiest sadhana to make the mind strong?

To make the mind strong, a man must be able to make a decision and stick to it without wavering. A gardener decides to plant potato, brinjal and cabbage, so that is his sadhana. Raidas was a cobbler; he decided to make shoes, that was his sadhana. Kabir was a weaver; he decided to make cloth, so that was his sadhana.

*The shawl is woven in a fine manner
But what is the warp and what is the woof?*

*And what thread has been used in it?
Ida and pingala are the warp and woof
And sushumna has been used as the thread.
The shawl is worn by gods, men and munis
And all have made it dirty by wearing it.
But Kabirdas has worn it very carefully
And taken it off in its pristine state.*

Whatever you do or want to do, that can become a sadhana provided you offer it to God. The feeling that 'I am the doer' must not be there. Some work as doctors, some as advocates, some as priests, some do business. Whatever work you do, you must have the feeling of dedication.

For example, you have a shop, but you consider it my shop. You think that I have put you there to sell the items in it and deposit the money in the bank. It is my money but you can spend it according to your needs. You do not have to give it to me. If I ask for money, you give me some. You run the shop in my name; I am the owner. While performing this duty, what frame of mind will you have? Will you think of yourself as the owner or as the caretaker? You should have the feeling that God is the owner.

A sannyasin leaves home and stays in the guru's ashram for twelve years to learn this. Whatever he does, he does it for Swamiji. He does not do anything for himself. He does everything from kitchen to computer, from banking to construction. Guruji does not go anywhere to get signatures from contractors to buy provisions. The sannyasin is the person doing all of it. This is action without desire for results. Lord Krishna has said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (9:27), "Whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you give, whatever you practise as austerity, O Arjuna, do it as an offering unto Me."

Action performed according to your wish, not for oneself but for others, is selfless action. In fact, in grihastha ashrama there is more possibility for selfless action, since everything a householder produces and whatever actions he performs are not done merely for himself. He does everything for his wife, for his children, for his kith and kin, for his dependents,

and for the society he lives in. There is a large debt to society owed by everyone. If society becomes unstable, what can you do? You will not be able to run to a shop nor will you be able to buy or sell goods or go to the bank.

Every person is indebted to society, and to pay back this debt, one has to keep aside a part of one's earnings. It is necessary for the sectors which are well off to support and uplift the weaker sectors of society, who are in need. It is the deprived who create social disturbances. They stop vehicles on the highways and rob them. If you neglect that sector, you will not be able to live and trade in security. So, remember that whatever you produce or earn should be distributed judiciously: this percentage for myself, this percentage for my children, this percentage for my dependents, this percentage for the priests, this percentage for the cows and oxen and whatever animal may be at home, this percentage for hospitals, this percentage for education, this percentage for distribution of food and feeding of saints. Such distribution of wealth must also be done.

In this way, everyone must work without desire for the fruits of action. When you develop that level of consciousness, then an unbelievable awakening will take place within you, and you can call it *chetana*, consciousness, or *atman*, soul. This means that your boundaries must not be narrow and small. This is mine, this is yours; these are the thoughts of narrow minded people. For a person with a big heart, the whole creation is kith and kin. It is also said in the *Mahabharata* that for the generous hearted, the whole world is a family.

What does neighbour mean?

Who is my neighbour? Amarwa, my village, is my next door neighbour; Rikhia is my very close neighbour. Ten lakh bighas, twenty lakh bighas, this is a neighbourhood. Neighbouring means nearby, next to you. Nowadays, when you can reach London in four hours by airplane, then what does neighbouring mean? During ancient days, neighbouring used to mean next to my house. These days, the whole world is next

door, so all people are your kith and kin. Now many of these relations of yours need your help. This is action without desire for fruits.

This is what I learned in my guru's ashram, that I was working for him, for my guru. When I had my own ashram, I thought, "Now, who am I working for?" Many are lost and unable to determine this, but I had no such problem. My guru had told me to teach yoga; he had made the plan and explained it so well that I was able to follow it through. I worked according to his instructions, until that chapter closed. Then my ishta devata told me to go and stay at Rikhia, so I came here. It is not a question of performing pious acts, but attuning oneself to God. One has to think along these lines.

How far is tantric knowledge true?

If there had been no truth in tantra, the entire Indian culture would not have flourished and would not be as it is today. Also, you would not find all the yogic systems which are still available today, because to perfect tantra all these yogas must be used, and sometimes other practices too, which are not even acceptable to society. What process do you follow while worshipping? You recite mantras, you offer bel patra, fruits, flowers, Ganga water, milk, curd and sweets to Lord Shiva. People consider this to be a vedic ritual, but in fact, the articles which are used, as well as the concepts and symbology, are all derived from tantric worship.

However, if people come to know this, they will say, "Do not go to him, he is a tantric." Even then, this knowledge has survived because it contains certain elements of truth. If it had contained only negative or wrong practices it would have disappeared. There is nothing in the left-hand path of tantra which is acceptable to society. If you practise it, you will be kicked out. However, the right-hand path is very useful, even today. It is from here that all the yogas have been derived.

There was a British judge in Kolkata by the name of Sir John Woodroffe. One day in the courtroom, he was about to pronounce judgement and, as he was writing it down, his thinking changed completely. After some time he tried

to pass judgement on the same case, and again his mind changed midway. He tried many times, and in the end he asked his steno, “Why does this happen? I have all the facts and I have made the decision, but I am unable to announce it before the court.” The steno replied, “It seems that someone is tampering somewhere. The person who is facing charges must be chanting some mantras, in order to influence the judgement.”

The judge tried many times, but could never pronounce the judgement. In the end, he decided to make an in-depth study of tantra. For this purpose, he accepted the vedic religion, wore a tuft of hair on the top of his head, and performed many tantric practices. He translated and wrote many authoritative texts on tantra under the pseudonym Arthur Avalon. You can buy these in any bookshop. He has written books on tantra shastra, shiva and shakti, mantra, kundalini and vedic texts. In these texts he discusses what tantra is, what shakti is and which tantra is prevalent in different parts of India. His books are very well known and are published in Hindi also. In fact, many great scholars have come to this path through these books.

Hasn't tantra been misused?

What is misused? Good things get misused as well as bad things. Everywhere is falsehood and hypocrisy, you cannot stop it. This has been so in all religions. It is only under the shelter of truth that falsehood prospers. Tantra is like the huge banyan tree, under which a sadhu sits beside his smouldering fire, dacoits share their booty, a tired traveller rests for the night, and lovers pass many an hour in each other's company. Now, tell me, what is the fault of the tree? A knife can be used in many ways, you can cut vegetables, you can cut someone's throat or you can perform an operation on the surgeon's table. If the knife is misused, it is not the fault of the knife; it is the fault of man's nature. What can be done about it?

A man who undertakes the practice of tantra must be so strong and determined that neither death nor birth, fame

nor humiliation, happiness nor sorrow, heat nor cold, have any effect on him. Many such saints have taken birth in this country. Even now, they are still living in different places, but they do not put up a signboard. Shopkeepers put up signboards and the bigger the signboard, the more customers it gathers. In tantra, however, one has to keep a low profile, so that the teachings do not come into the line of vision of the common man. Whoever God sends, that is fine, but there is no shop.

Satsang 4

November 18, 1994, Afternoon

I always pray to God, “As long as I practise sadhana, keep me fit. The day I give it up, do whatever you wish with me.” If I do not perform sadhana, if I do not live a spiritual life, it is better to get sick and die. Life has no meaning if one does not devote oneself entirely to God. Without Him, one would never have been born. Tulsidas says:

*The human body is obtained by great fortune.
Scriptures say that it is difficult
To be obtained even by gods.
Obtaining this seat of sadhana
Is a gateway to liberation.
One who does not pave the way for the next world
Laments morosely,
Wrongly attributing the blame
To time, karma and God.
The purpose of obtaining this body
Is not for sense enjoyment,
Because even heavenly enjoyments are shortlived
And ultimately full of afflictions.
Those who are interested in sensory enjoyment
While having a human body
Are fools who barter nectar in exchange for poison.*

How did the form of God come about?

How do you make a bracelet from gold or a shirt from a piece of cloth? How do you make a piece of cloth from thread or thread from cotton? This is called *parinaam*, result. Cotton becomes thread, thread becomes cloth, cloth becomes a shirt. Now, what is the form of cotton? A shirt or thread? Cotton has no particular form. Therefore, every cloth is cotton. What form does gold have? Is it long? Is it wide? Is it deep? Gold has no particular form, but once an ornament is made, that becomes the form of gold.

Therefore, every form that gold assumes is a form of gold, but yet that is not its original form. The same principle applies to *mitti*, earth. What is the primary form of earth? Is it a clay bowl, pitcher or pot? No! Any form that earth assumes is just a form. Similarly, what is the form of God? Whatever form He assumes is His form. That is why He is known as the form of forms.

In the *Kathopanishad* (2:2:9), Yama explains this to Nachiketa:

*Just as fire, though one, entering the world
Adopts the shapes of the different objects it burns,
Similarly, the one atman of all living things, though one,
Assumes the forms of the various objects He enters
And exists also beyond.*

In modern psychology, the word archetype is used; in Sanskrit, we use the word *prateek*, or symbol. Each and every object which exists in the universe has many forms at the same time. What you perceive and comprehend is the gross form and what you think about is not gross. When you look at a flower, you are seeing a gross flower. However, when you think of a flower, you do not see the gross flower; you see the subtle flower which is the reflection of your mind. When you visualize or think of the flower, you are actually seeing the form in your mind. That is the basis of perception, but when you look at a rose, the perception, cognition and comprehension is taking place within the mind from the gross plane.

Now, this experience which takes place within yourself can be perceived at different stages, according to the depth of your mind. You see the rose in a dream; that is one state of mind. You see the rose in meditation; that is another. Therefore, the rose which you saw in a dream is not the same as the rose you saw in meditation, nor is it the same as the rose you saw on the bush. They are three different roses. When your mind becomes very concentrated and deep and you can see the rose as clearly as you would see it on the bush, that is the experience of an archetype.

The direct experience of an archetype is called *aparokshanubhuti*. That is what the form of Shiva is, the expression of your deepest spirit. It is not the manifestation of your mind, senses, buddhi or intellect. It is the manifestation of *antar atma*, the innermost core of your spirit. So, when Jung and other great psychiatrists speak about archetypes, they are talking of something which exists within the universe, because the concept of the universe is also within the mind. We are part of the universe. The sun, moon and stars are part of the universe. The atmosphere, the environment is part of the universe. When we speak about the universe, do we mean matter only? No, we are talking of existence: the existence of the material universe, the existence of the mental universe, the existence of the supramental universe. You have heard of bhuloka, bhuvarloka, swarloka, mahaloka, janaloka, tapoloka and satyaloka. They are not separate spheres of existence. They exist one within another, just as from milk, you make curd; from curd, you make butter; from butter, you make ghee.

Now, curd is more refined than milk; butter is more refined than yoghurt, and ghee is more refined than butter. In the same way, one loka is subtler than the next. Satyaloka is the innermost dimension, but this does not mean that it is somewhere high above. *Satyaloka* is everywhere; it is the essence of the universe. *Bhuloka* is the expression of the universe, what you can perceive with your senses: the moon, the stars, the planets; Saturn, Uranus, Pluto, etc. These and many more are all part of bhuloka, the manifest dimension. Satyaloka is the subtlest essence which is unmanifest. These

two dimensions exist side by side, one within the other, just as butter exists in milk. You cannot see it, but you can separate it by churning. Discussion of these things, however, brings no gain. They are all speculation; truth can only be experienced.

How can people like us, who live in the world, develop bhakti?

Bhakti is the ultimate point of fusion, when you split the atom and explode the nucleus. The ultimate point is *bhakti*, devotion, love. Bhakti is not religious devotion where you go to a temple or a church, say prayers, offer flowers and do pooja. That is not real devotion; it has to come from the heart. Bhakti is an expression of *bhavana*, feeling from the heart; it is not a product of intellect.

I will explain what I mean by feeling. What happens when you feel anxious and worried? You think about the same difficulty all the time. Even while eating, the mind suddenly reverts to it. Why? Because you have experienced some trauma or calamity, and that feeling comes back again and again. So, you have the awareness of that feeling. This awareness is in everyone, in the whole of creation, in all mankind, in all animals.

You do not have to produce feelings; everyone experiences them to the fullest degree. You can see it in the family members when they fight. When the eldest son dies, the parents never sit down calmly and say, "Well, our son is dead, now what should we do?" They start crying, breaking their heads, and doing all kinds of things. Bhavana is fully developed in every being; you do not have to do anything to develop it. That is why you hate and why you love.

The intellect is discerning, but bhavana is blind. A girl falls in love with a boy. She thinks he is the only fellow of worth, the most comely young man, the ideal lover, as if there are no other boys in the world. Bhavana here is a limited concept. The feeling creates a limit and immediately a circle is drawn around it. The girl thinks that he is the most handsome boy, as if no other exists. Similarly, the boy thinks that she is the

most beautiful girl, even though God has produced millions of attractive women.

Bhavana is inward, not outward. Because a circle is drawn, it limits the flow of thoughts and feelings to the object of emotion. It intensifies and unites the feeling. Now, you have to streamline your bhavana. Instead of directing it towards fear, anger, animosity, hatred, maya and moha, you have to direct it towards God. When you can love Him as you would love your boyfriend or girlfriend, then God will be there; He will come immediately. Tulsidas says in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*In whose heart, there is love of divine nature
There the Lord manifests, as it is His nature.
God pervades everywhere alike.
It is known that He manifests out of love.
Tell me the place, time or direction
Where there is absence of the Lord.
He pervades the ones with and without money
And yet He is apart and without attachment.
God manifests himself out of love
As fire manifests out of friction.*

The last pronouncement in *Ramacharitamanas* is the most beautiful and correct pronouncement: “Even as a lustful man loves a woman or a miserly man loves money, may I love God.” There is nothing beyond that. You cannot realize anything unless you are mad after it. If I suffer from Rama psychosis, well and good; Krishna neurosis, well and good. Tell me, what is the use of suffering from fear psychosis or neurosis, or from sex mania? It is better to have some good mania, so that you get something positive from it.

Paramahansa Ramakrishna was known in Bengal as a mad man. Now, thousands worship him as a god, but when he lived, many people such as Keshav Chandra Sen called him a maniac. Ramakrishna used to say, “It’s all right if you call me a fool. I accept it, if you say I am mad.” When Uddhava went to the Gopis living in Gokul with a letter from Krishna and advised them to practise yoga, they told him:

*Shyam is our body, mind and wealth,
 O Udho, we are immersed in Shyam all the time.
 Shyam is our heart, and Shyam is our life,
 We cannot survive without Shyam.
 The name of Shyam is the prop of the blind.
 Shyam is destiny, Shyam is intellect,
 Shyam is the Lord of our lives.
 Shyam is pleasant, He is our wellbeing
 And the seat of beauty.
 O Udho, you are insane
 To come running with a letter.
 Where shall we keep yoga
 When Shyam is present in every pore of our being?*

The madness should be like this. In order to realize something which you have never seen, you must direct your emotions totally in the right direction. That is bhakti.

Wasn't Ramakrishna a married man who worshipped his wife as Devi?

Yes, he and Sarada did not have a relationship of husband and wife; he worshipped her as Mother. That is why people thought he was abnormal, because he worshipped his wife as Mother. Christ was not an ordinary person. An extraordinary person has to be something beyond normal. When you have done a lot of concentration, pranayama and other practices, then the last sadhana is bhakti. Direct all the feelings for your wife, for anyone you love or hate, for anything you fear, towards bhakti and develop a relationship with God. Radha developed her relationship with Lord Krishna by thinking, "He is my *premi*, my beloved." Kaushalya developed her relationship with Lord Rama by thinking, "He is my son."

It will be difficult to consider God as your son or your ishta devata. You have to develop a relationship first. It is no use talking about this in terms of intellect. There has to be a deep feeling. Mirabai and many other saints like her developed a relationship with God. She considered God as her husband, her Gopal. Though she was married to a Rajput prince, she

never considered him as her husband. She always considered Krishna as her husband. Like that, there have been many great saints. Mirabai used to sing:

*Only Giridhara Gopala is mine, none else.
My husband is He who wears
The peacock feather as a crown.
I have abandoned the modest behaviour of my family.
What can one gain by such restraint?
I have left all feeling of shamefulness
By sitting in the company of saints.
I have planted the creeper of love,
Irrigating it with my tears.
Now the creeper has developed fully
Ready to blossom into flowers of bliss.
I feel joy at the sight of devotees
And weep when I see the world.
Maid-servant Mira prays to Giridhara
To liberate her.*

Bhakti is the pinnacle of spiritual life, not *jnana*, knowledge. How do you know whether what you read in books is right or wrong? The person who wrote the book may also have speculated that the universe is like this or like that. The writers have no objective evidence. They just philosophize and we believe it. We may like their way of writing, but it is pure speculation! You can't prove that it is right, as there is no proof that it is.

Maya and bhakti are both feminine aspects; yoga, dispassion and renunciation are masculine. This maya fascinates yogis. The dispassionate ones are charmed, and so are the renunciates. If their emotions are directed towards bhakti, they are not captivated, because maya cannot cast her spell on bhakti. She may attract renunciation and dispassion, because they are masculine, but bhakti is not charmed. Tulsidas has described this in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*I am not showing partiality here
But saying what the Vedas, Puranas and saints have said.*

*O enemy of serpents, this is a peculiar rule
 That a woman is not charmed to see a woman.
 All know that Bhakti and Maya are both feminine,
 And also that Bhakti is very dear to Rama,
 While poor Maya is only a dancer.
 Seeing Rama favouring Bhakti,
 Maya is very much afraid of her.
 In whose heart the Bhakti of Rama
 Is eternally present,
 Incomparable and without devious design,
 Maya feels shy to approach Him
 And fails to exercise her powers.
 Thinking thus, the munis and realized persons
 Pay obeisance to Bhakti,
 Who is the source of all happiness.*

He also says that one who offends a devotee is sure to be burnt by the fire of Rama's wrath.

I have stopped reading books. I have discarded, or rather returned, every kind of book, and I have decided that the only book which I will read now is the story of Sri Rama by Tulsidas. As I read, I find many good ideas for myself. Not knowledge, I am not talking about knowledge, but the story is very nice. I will tell you how it begins.

After Lord Shiva married Parvati, they came back to Kailash. One day, while Shiva was sitting under a banyan tree, Parvati sat beside him and said, "I have heard that God is nameless, formless and fearless. You always take the name of Rama; you worship Rama, but he was the son of a king. His wife was abducted by Ravana, the demon king, and then Rama fought Ravana. All this confuses me. Can you explain it to me?"

*Is that the same Rama
 Who is the son of the king of Ayodhya?
 Or is He the One who is unborn,
 Without attributes and invisible?
 If He is the son of a king,*

*Whose intellect was deluded at the parting of his wife,
How can he be Brahman?
Pondering thus and hearing his glory,
My intellect puzzles very much
As to how he is desireless, all pervading and eternal.
Tell me, my Lord, and make me understand it.
Knowing me to be ignorant, please do not be angry,
And do as you like to uproot my delusion.*

Lord Shiva smiled and said, “Parvati, you asked me this very same question in your previous life. What could I say about it? So, you went yourself to test Rama. At that time, he was in exile, roaming in the forest. His wife Sita had just been abducted by Ravana, and he was crying with anguish, because he loved her so much. You materialized yourself before him in the form of Sita. When Rama saw you he asked, ‘Oh wife of Shiva, why have you come here?’”

*Joining hands the Lord bowed down to her,
And told his name and that of his father also.
After that he enquired about Lord Shiva
And also asked why she was roaming in the jungle alone.*

“When you looked at Rama, you had the vision of Virat, the cosmic Vishnu. Now, in this life, you are again asking me the same question.” Parvati said, “Yes, but now I am not asking out of doubt; I am asking because I want to know. At that time, I was very critical, but now I have no doubt about Lord Rama or the divinity of his incarnation. I just want to know how and why this happened. I no longer question your devotion to Rama; I know it is your life, but please explain all this to me.” Shiva said, “You are most fortunate, Parvati. I will now answer your question.” Then Shiva started narrating the life of Lord Rama, highlighting the glory of his name:

*Lord Rama liberated all his ardent devotees,
Such as Shabari and Jatayu, the vulture.
His name also liberated innumerable rascals.
All these qualities and stories are known through the Vedas.*

*It is known to all that Rama gave shelter
 To Sugriva and Vibhishan both,
 But his name also favoured many humble persons.
 His fine reputation is shining in the world
 As well as in the Vedas.
 Rama formed an army of bears and monkeys
 Who laboured hard to construct a bridge.
 But by taking His name, the ocean of the world is dried up.
 Think it over in your mind, O virtuous persons.
 In the battle, Rama killed Ravana,
 Along with all his family members
 Then He returned to His own place with Sita.
 Rama became king and Ayodhya his capital.
 The munis and gods sing His praise in beautiful verses.
 Remembering his name with love,
 His servants conquer without effort
 The most valiant army of delusion.
 They roam with pleasure, filled with His love,
 They have no anxiety, even in dream,
 Due to the grace of the name.
 Name is superior to either the unmanifest Brahman
 Or the form of Rama, and has the power
 To bless even those who bless others.
 Lord Shiva knew this well when he chose it
 From among the thousand million attributes
 Of Rama in different ages.*

What can people do these days to keep their marital relationship from eroding?

The husband should be like Rama to the wife, and the wife should be like Sita to the husband. However, it does not happen, because this is an ideal; nobody applies it to their life. That is why the relationship between man and woman has not produced any positive result. In tantra, it is clearly stated that the relationship between a man and a woman has three purposes: first, progeny, second, pleasure, and third, samadhi. You have had the first and second experience, but how many have the third? Have you had an awakening? No, because the

relationship between husband and wife must be adjusted in youth and often during old age.

A man of eighty and his wife of seventy may still love each other. What problem is there? Love has nothing to do with the body; it is a feeling, and the sexual relationship is an expression of it. However, that is not the total definition of love; it is not even a definition at all. The marital relationship is purely spiritual, and it has to be readjusted, redefined, recodified. What is this relationship? Is it only for progeny, only for pleasure? No, kundalini awakening can also take place and does take place through this relationship. It has taken place in many tantric yogis, and tantric texts are the chronicles.

Sita and Rama loved each other so very much in order to show us how we should live. The message sent by Lord Rama to Sita through Hanuman touches the heart:

*O my beloved,
The secret of our love is known to my mind only,
And that mind is always directed towards you.
Now only you can fathom the depth of our love.*

After returning from Lanka, Hanumanji describes the condition of Sita to Rama:

*Your name was the guard, day and night,
And meditation on you was the shutter.
The eyes were fixed on your feet.
How could her prana leave the body?*

In modern life, that ideal is changing. For the last one hundred and fifty years, people have not necessarily agreed with this ideal. They say, "If the husband is good, I will love him," or "If the wife is good, I will love her. But, if she is bad, I will divorce her." This is the trend, and there is a reason for it also. There are many husbands who treat their wives badly, who snatch away their ornaments, sell them in the market, and then go to the race course. There are bad men in the world, and that is why the change has taken place.

What about the women?

Women, by and large, have more *viveka*, power of discrimination, not only in India, but in the West also, and in all parts of the world. They can discern between right and wrong. It is due to their influence that dharma is still in existence. By nature, women are attracted towards the fine arts. Viveka, proper judgement, is a fine art, like music: tabla, sitar, violin or flute. They understand directly that this is dharma and this is adharma. Men decide what is dharma and adharma, according to the situation.

Women are not selfish. Men are very selfish. If women have become selfish, it is because we have made them that way. Women have to become selfish now in order to survive, otherwise they would not. They are living with men who are selfish and self-centred, like animals. Men do not love their women; they rape them. Even after marriage, rape is a reality.

Women have very fine qualities, because if God had not created those qualities in my mother or your mother, this world would have been a living hell. That does not really apply to men. Most men gamble, most men drink, most men go to prostitutes, most men go to jail. There may be a few females in jail, but generally there is a point of restraint in their life. Women are also very capable, as capable as men.

How can we unite with the ishta devata?

Unite your mind with your ishta devata. Lean your mind towards your ishta, just as you cook food for those you love, your husband and children. For whom are you cooking? For them, they like this, they like that. Your mind is running here and there, but still you are cooking for them. That means there is awareness of the children and husband, of the ones you love. That is the main thing. It is not the act which is important; it is the awareness of the person for whom you are doing it. In *Srimad Bhagavata*, the sadhana of the Gopis has been described:

Those Gopis are blessed

Who have surrendered their hearts to Lord Krishna.

*While performing their domestic work,
 Like milking the cows, thrashing paddy,
 Churning curd, sweeping,
 Smearing the floors with cow dung,
 Quietening their weeping children,
 Singing lullabies and cleaning clothes,
 They sing the praise of Lord Krishna,
 Their hearts filled with His love,
 Eyes filled with tears
 And throats choked with feelings.*

So, first, you have to discover your relationship with God. That is your first priority in life. That discovery should not be made on the basis of what you read in books, because the books say that God is the soul of your soul, mind of your mind, prana of your pranas. Such theories are very vague; I do not understand them.

In the *Kenopanishad* (1–2) it has been said:

*The wise person, after being sure
 Of who is the eye of the eyes,
 Ear of the ears, mind of the minds,
 Speech of the speeches and prana of the pranas,
 Becomes liberated in life,
 And after death becomes immortal,
 Free from the wheel of birth and death.*

What is your relationship with God? Tulsidas says:

*You are kind, I am poor.
 You are the provider, I am a beggar.
 I am a famous sinner, You are the destroyer of sins.
 You are Lord of the helpless –
 Who is more helpless than I?
 There is no other distressed like me.
 And there is none
 To destroy this distress but You!
 You are Brahman, I am jiva.
 You are master, I am servant.*

*You are father, mother, guru, friend
And well-wisher in all respects.
From the different relationships between You and me,
Acknowledge that which You prefer,
So that Tulsi can somehow take shelter at Your merciful feet.*

There is a Sanskrit prayer which says, “You are my father, you are my mother, you are my friend, you are everything, my Lord.” Always think of God as everything to you. This is something which you experience through yoga. It is not possible to understand this without experiencing it. It is a manifestation or an expression of love.

The closest relationship in the world is between husband and wife, then follows father and mother, and brother and sister. These are very powerful relationships which draw the feelings from inside. You can mobilize your bhavana through certain relationships, but if you consider God as your personal deity only, you will not be able to mobilize and dynamize the bhavana.

How did Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Mirabai and many other saints mobilize the bhavana? They made their bhavana act. It was a very powerful, dynamic reaction that infused, influenced and took over their minds. You can have two husbands, one external and the other internal; I do not see any difficulty in that. Guru Nanak regarded God as his husband:

*O my Lord, dearest, dearer than life,
Kind hearted giver of grace –
Bestow Your bhakti and name upon me.*

*O my Lover,
I remember Your feet
My heart awaits You.*

*I pray to saints also
But thirst
For Your darshan in my heart.*

*I wish to see You in separation,
In death,
In life.*

*Your darshan, Your name, supports this poor wretch,
O wealth of my life,
Nanak seeks Your grace O my Lord.*

In any case, God is our master; He looks after us. He has given us His *sneha*, affection; *karuna*, compassion; *bhakti* and *prem*, love; so He is doing the job of a husband. In spiritual language, we are all females.

Mirabai was the princess of Chittor, a very powerful kingdom of that time. She was married to Rana Sangram Singh, but she could not manage in the palace, because she became neurotic about God. She used to say, “My husband is Sri Krishna, who plays the flute, who sports peacock feathers in his hair. He is my husband, nobody else.” So, ultimately she had to leave her home. When she went to Vrindavan, she tried to meet Maharaj Vijay Krishna, but she was told by his disciple that he did not meet women, and she was female. Mirabai said, “What? Who is this man? I thought there is only one purusha, only one male. Who is this other purusha that has come here? I want to meet him.” When Maharaj heard this, he was moved and he came out to meet her. So actually, purusha is only one, the atma, the self. We are all females. We have all the feminine qualities of love, hatred, compassion, jealousy, kindness.

Can you tell us about the paramahansa tradition?

Sannyasins of the paramahansa tradition do not meet people. Meetings are prohibited, but this year I have called you here for one month. When I first came to Rikhia, people used to knock on the door at any time. When people came for darshan and I was unable to meet them, they felt offended. Therefore, I am meeting everyone during this one month. However, when the stage of paramahansa sannyasa is reached, attending meetings and taking alms are prohibited. Mouna, worship of God and sadhana have to be done twenty-

four hours of the day. These are the rules. To bless malas, to give mantra diksha, all this can be done up to the stage of paramahansa sannyasa, as long as one is guru. Even I used to do it while I was guru. Did I refuse anyone? Never, but I do not do those things now.

Please sit down and do your namaskara from there. Namaskara is like that, it is from the heart. Sit down there happily and listen to the talks. After that, say “Namo Narayana” from your seat and go away. A saint has said, “Love depends on sincerity, not on outward rites. Bowing down the head is not salutation.” We say “Namo Narayana” here. *Narayana* is God. I address you as Narayana and offer you my salutations. Before we said “Hari Om” in the ashram.

Sannyasa has four stages. One is *kutichak*, when a sannyasi lives with his guru for ten to twelve years. The second stage is *parivrajaka*, wandering for ten to twelve years. Then comes *hamsa*, the third stage: opening an ashram, starting a math, erecting a mandir, running an orphanage, opening a hospital. The fourth stage is *paramahansa*, which means to stay in one place, to become stable. It is not that one day you visit Pune, and another day you bathe in the Ganga. No, to become stable one must remain alone in one place.

Before that, we can go here and there, to the satsangs and kirtans. But paramahansas have to stay in one place. The first rule is not to play the role of guru or to make disciples. It is a very good rule. In old age, how long can you go on caring for your children? There is a time for retirement. The second rule is no prostrating at the feet. When you do not meet anyone, who will touch your feet? It is also a very good rule.

Deoghar is a very beautiful place. It is the burial ground of Bhagavati Sati. When Lord Shiva was wandering like a madman with Sati’s body, different parts of her body fell here and there. At last only her heart was left, and he offered that as an oblation here. Thus, Deoghar is known as *chitabhoomi*, the burial ground. When I was staying at Trayambakeshwar, near Nasik, during my anushthana, I was wondering what to do next, for I was unemployed. I couldn’t decide what to

do, whether to go into samadhi underground or beneath the water like Agastya Muni.

In July 1989, on the night of Guru Poornima, I received the command, “Repeat my name with every breath.” The next question which came to my mind was, where to do it? Udasi Baba had offered me a cottage at Gangotri. Gurushikar is at Mount Abu where Dattatreya’s parents, Atri and Anusuiya, left their footprints. Niranjani Akhara had asked me to stay there. While pondering this question, again the command came. There was only one word, “Chitabhoomi.”

In the ancient texts, Deoghar was known as Chita Bhumau. I thought to myself, if the chita of Sati is found here, then it is fine for the son to die where the mother died. It is a matter of great joy for the son to have his last rites performed at the place where his mother died. She is our mother; we grieve for her, so we come here to spend our last days. Therefore, do not expect any preaching from me. I have forgotten all of that. I have no memory of many things.

Satsang 5

November 19, 1994, Morning

Why do you keep so many Ganeshas?

People have sent them all to me and I have given them different names. I keep one Ganesha here which I have named Ganesha Ramani, because Ramani signifies one of the backward class. In the kitchen is Ganesha Iyer, because my Guruji was an Iyer. In my bedroom is Ganesha Bhattacharya, and towards the back is Ganesha Ali. Since Ganeshaji has come here, there has been an improvement in our diet. Now delicious food is prepared here. Someone from Dhanbad brought a trekker load of basmati rice, so for months together we have eaten basmati rice. Since Ganeshaji likes to eat good food, he has made arrangements for himself. However, we are the ones who eat it. For us, it is prasad. Today a new Ganesha has come from Italy, a dancing Ganesha. Ganesha is the embodiment of total knowledge. Kartikeya, the other son of Lord Shiva, was an ordinary person, but Ganesha is learned. He enjoys studying, reading and writing. He worked as Vedavyas' steno in order to write the entire Mahabharata epic.

Do love and bhakti go together?

Yes, in Sufism, they call it *ishk*. People say, "Ishk ho gaya." Ishk is of two types: *ishk hakiki* and *ishk mizazi*. Worldly love, *sansarikprem*, love of material objects and attachment to them, is called *ishk mizazi*. Love for reality, for *Haq*, for God, is called *ishk hakiki* and that is *bhakti*, real love.

My mind is never calm. Even if I try to relax, it doesn't become calm and quiet. What can I do to change it?

Do not try. If you want water to remain still, then you have to keep it in a glass. If you pour water on the ground, it will run in different directions. The water in a river always flows; it never remains still. However, the water in a pond is always calm and still. The water in a pot is also still, but not the water in the river. Your mind is like a river. When your emotional relationships or your feelings for someone stabilize, then the mind also becomes stable. When the emotions and feelings are unsteady, then the mind cannot remain calm. Tulsidas has shown the right method to stabilize the mind and emotions and experience peace:

*O foolish mind, listen to my instructions.
Rascal, being averse to the feet of Hari,
You cannot have any kind of delight.
Why do you not realize it at the very beginning?
Departing from the mind and eyes of the Lord,
The moon and the sun are experiencing much trouble.
They have to roam in the firmament,
Night and day toiling hard.
In addition, there is Rahu, their great enemy.
Ganga is a very sacred river
And her glory spreads to the three worlds,
But, because of departing from the feet of the Lord,
Her suffering has not ended up to this day –
She is forced to flow on the ground.
Calamities cannot end
Unless one remembers Rama.
The Vedas have dispelled all doubts about this.
Tulsidas says, abandoning all,
Become the servant of Rama.*

When the wife dies, the husband thinks about her day and night. His mind becomes stable, but in the wrong place, like water in a dirty glass, not in a clean glass. There are positive ways to make the mind one-pointed, like singing kirtan and bhajan. However, the mind will remain one-pointed for a

short period only, because the events of the day accumulate. The wind begins to blow and keeps on blowing until the flame of the lamp is extinguished.

Why does the experience of sorrow exist?

Sorrow exists because man enjoys being in that state. He likes it because his mind becomes one-pointed in sorrow, which is something that does not happen in happiness. When man is faced with sorrow, his mind jumps and sticks to it like Fevicol. Although man desires happiness, he enjoys being in sorrow. The mind is attracted towards sorrow, because it attains pratyahara, withdrawal of the senses from every experience other than the sorrow. Sorrow causes a powerful jolt, whereas in happiness this jolt does not occur. Therefore, sorrow, not happiness, induces pratyahara. The jolt of death is more powerful than the pangs of birth. Sorrow is an intense and powerful experience. Happiness is a mild experience. The experience of sorrow is so powerful that it pulls the mind, and thus the entire being, into it. The mind is immersed in sorrow and then gets carried away by it. Sometimes one gets involved to the point of becoming a neurotic or lunatic, and finds no escape route. This is a philosophical definition.

According to psychology and medical science, when a man is affected by sorrow, certain channels of the brain are influenced, and they produce a certain secretion. When this secretion enters the bloodstream, it produces a state of depression which lowers the stress on the heart. This does not happen in happiness. Happiness excites and this increases the pressure on the heart. Therefore, though man desires happiness, he likes to remain immersed in sorrow.

If nothing real exists in this world, why does sorrow exist?

The world is neither real nor unreal. It is mixed. The three gunas of nature: sattwa, rajas and tamas, permute and combine to form numerous types of manifestations. Therefore, to say that this exists and that does not is incorrect. Everything exists in the world. You cannot say that it does not exist, but that which is not, is not. Real and unreal have to be

understood in this sense. Sorrow exists. You cannot say it is unreal.

Of course, I am not speaking on a philosophical level, as a sage or a saint. I am talking about that which applies at a common level. Happiness exists; sorrow also exists. Man desires happiness and not sorrow. Even animals desire happiness and comfort. When Bholenath feels cold, he comes inside and sleeps. When it gets colder, he goes under my bed, so even he does not like sorrow. In vedanta it says that one should desire freedom from both excessive happiness and excessive sorrow. This is because both exist.

Man has learned from experience that the mind is more attracted and attuned to sorrow than to happiness. You know all about suffering and sorrow in society, but even sadhus and mahatmas experience suffering. In winter they remain naked; they immerse themselves in icy cold water. Do they not feel pain and suffering? Do they not feel icold? During summer, they sit in temperatures of sixty to seventy degrees celsius. Do they not suffer? Yes, but they actually enjoy it, because it is self-imposed pain. Man goes out of his way to impose pain on himself.

Even in the ashram, my dream was to stay in seclusion, remove all my clothes, smear ash all over myself and beg for my food. All this five-star hotel business meant nothing to me. When I stayed in a five-star hotel, I used to spread my blanket on the floor and sleep. Why? Because suffering is a state which has a tremendous effect on the mind and emotions. If you can accept it, then this effect becomes a reality. In fact, I think that pain is the reality, and happiness may be just a shadow. Sorrow is the reality, but everyone desires happiness. By understanding sorrow and converting it into a form of sadhana, the same sorrow becomes a source of happiness and the end result is extremely fulfilling.

While highlighting the value of sorrow or pain, one saint opines:

*May that happiness go to hell
Which removes the Name from the heart.*

*Blessed is that suffering
Which forces us to remember
The Name every moment.*

Previously, I could not bear the heat during summer. If I had to go out for a program, I used to inform the organizers beforehand to arrange for a fan. I could not manage without a fan, because where I was born, the temperature never rose to twenty-five degrees celsius. Heat irritated me. After meals in Munger, a power cut would become unbearable, so I had central air conditioning installed. After coming here, I started panchagni, because that is my sadhana. However, the heat that I used to feel in Munger, I did not feel in panchagni. Now the heat of Munger is nothing for me, because I have sat in sixty to seventy degrees celsius in comfort.

Sorrow has to be faced, and that sorrow results in joy. If you come to terms with your situation in life and make an agreement with it, happiness will follow. Then neither death nor adversity will have any meaning. An Urdu poet has said that life and death are nothing but the soul changing dress. Searching for happiness is like trying to catch hold of your own shadow, which is impossible.

Rama was an incarnation of God himself. Happiness was under his control. He was the Lord of bliss and king of the world. Why did he not enjoy the treasures of happiness at all times? For twelve years he lived with his guru and slept on the ground. Then, for fourteen years, he lived in the jungle, treading the path of thorns. That makes twenty-six years of suffering and hardship. The events that took place after this period were also painful. How much happiness did he enjoy? He was master of all events; he could turn the course of events. Why did he not alter the course of events in his own life to suit his convenience? When the Lord did not change his situation in life, why should we change ours? Kabir has aptly remarked:

*Pain is punishment for this body
And it comes to all.*

*The wise man bears it with fortitude
The foolish man bears it weeping.*

It is said that not one leaf can move without God's will. How should we understand this?

You have to understand this concept in the right light. He is the supreme authority. Similarly, there is a Central Government that makes laws. Those laws are applied and the judgements are given by the district courts. Will the verdict of death by hanging come from the Central Government? No. So, to say that not even a leaf can move without God's will is rhetoric, mere talk. It actually means that all the events of this world are directed through the will of God. As long as the power station generates power, we will have electricity in our homes. Without the power from the powerhouse, there will be no light in any house. God is that kind of centre.

God's maya has two natures. One is para prakriti and the other is apara prakriti. With the help of these two prakritis, He governs the entire creation. Then, in this universe or cosmos, there are also ministries and departments. Varuna is the minister of water; Pavan is the minister of air. Similarly, He has different forces under His command to whom He has delegated His authority.

There is an incident in the *Ramayana*, when Lord Rama had drawn his bow and arrow to part the waters of the ocean. What did the ocean say? It said, "Lord, you are the one who has made the laws for the entire creation. Now, if you violate the laws which you yourself have made, how will they work?" Therefore, this saying that not even a leaf can move without God's will has to be understood in the right perspective.

Is it true that by guru's grace change takes place in one's life?

The ostrich is known for its behaviour. When a fox chases an ostrich, it buries its head in the sand, thinking that the fox will not be able to see it. We also do the same thing. Some people live in illusions! They ask the guru to make the impossible happen. They come and say, "Swamiji, please,

take away our sorrow and make us happy.” Now, what can one do? So, the guru pretends to do some magic which works like a placebo and the people like it. When the child cries, the mother puts him to her breast simply to stop his crying, not to feed him.

Is it the Lord who rewards or punishes us for our karmas?

It is the karmas themselves which produce results. Karma is an independent entity created by God. As I said earlier, the laws made by the Central Government in Delhi are imposed here by the district magistrate. Similarly, the karmic law enforced here is the same law that the Lord made.

What about the saying, ‘What cannot be done by law is done by the sage?’

That is just a saying. I cannot speak for others. Often a man has no problem, but he thinks that he has. Then it helps to clear the mind of the person and everything becomes all right. I do not like to talk about these things, because God’s *lila*, play, is beyond comprehension. Of course, I can speak on the basis of what has been written in books, but God’s *lila* is beyond intellect. Moreover, He doesn’t permit anyone to unravel the mysteries of His *lila*. He says, “Do not interfere in this enigma created by me.” When Yamaraja was questioned by Nachiketa, he gave him some answers, but he evaded giving direct answers on those topics pertaining to truth. These topics will always remain a mystery. Sages and saints have come to realize this.

How can we keep our culture from disintegrating?

One religion, one culture gives birth to another. The civilization that exists today will not remain for eternity. It is not a natural law for any culture to remain forever. Each leaves behind an offspring or two. I do not belong to a low caste; I was born into a high caste family. However, because I am a sannyasin, I do not belong to any caste, class or political party. I have to speak the truth only. Brahmins were intellectual, knowledgeable and capable people. They played the leading

role in the development of civilization. They wrote the Vedas and shastras and ruled the people.

Later on, they became selfish and distanced certain tribes from society, calling them untouchables. They declared that the mere shadow of an untouchable was impure. Lord Buddha tried to set matters right, but he could not do so. Kabir tried, but he was not successful either. The Muslims tried and they also failed. Gandhiji tried, but even he could not do much. That separation of the backward classes from society was a big mistake, and now these classes are reacting.

Backward class means deprived in monetary terms, education, assets, but not in samskaras. These people have good samskaras. I have often lived with them in the villages. I still live with them and meet them, even their women and children. They are not backward in samskaras. It is possible that Indian culture is alive only due to them. However educated and powerful a society may be, unless the family structure is strong, the society disintegrates.

A necklace, no matter how beautiful, be it of gold, diamonds or pearls, will scatter unless there is a thread through it. Similarly, a family can live in unity and harmony, while preserving the best samskaras, only if the family ties are strong. This trait is present in all the backward classes. The family ties are very strong. They also sacrifice a lot for the family. For example, our driver could get a good job in Delhi, paying five thousand rupees per month, but he will not leave his wife, children and parents for the money.

This is a very good samskara; he has sacrificed money for family unity. He may be earning only seven to eight hundred rupees per month here, whereas in Delhi, he could be employed in a good company. If he goes to Delhi, however, his family life will disintegrate. Either he will live alone there, or take his wife and children, leaving his parents alone back here. I have tried sending a number of people outside for employment, but they have all refused. They say they will work only if I provide a job somewhere close by.

The people of backward classes are very conscious of their family system. For a strong national identity, a strong, well

planned and well organized family structure is an absolute necessity. Once disintegration starts within the family structure, we will be faced with the same situation that is prevailing in every family in the European countries today. Within thirty to forty years, civilization will come to an end. Our destruction is very near indeed, therefore, we must give up our old prejudices.

Dharma asks us to care for our younger brothers who are weak, lame, blind or disabled. If one of our sons is a graduate or a postgraduate, a professor, doctor or lecturer, and the other son is disabled, will you take equal care of them? Which one will you serve more? The disabled son surely. So, it is the social responsibility of each one of us, of every brahmin, kshatriya, vaishya, and even the uppercrust of backward castes, to provide an opportunity to those who are handicapped from the point of view of income, resources and education.

Caste is a reality. It is a physiological, biological, genetic truth. It is not a mythical concoction. Genetic strain is known as caste. Genes are of different types. My genetic personality is not the same as yours, my son would receive my genetic transfer. How can one say that caste does not exist? Castes exist; genes exist and genes unite. I am speaking from the scientific point of view. Gotra is also a quality of genes, and genes are *tattwas*, elements. From the caste and the gotra, we gain an understanding of the genetic identity of a person. The word *jati* comes from the word *jnati* which means knowledge through which one can be identified, one's mark of identity.

Caste exists; this cannot be denied. A few years ago, research discovered that some people living in Russia were genealogically related to India. They may have migrated there some thousand years ago. They have lived and multiplied in Russia, but their batch remains the same. Therefore, I am not challenging the caste system nor am I saying that caste distinctions do not exist. Caste is very important in nature. There are forty-five varieties of eucalyptus trees, and hundreds of varieties of mango, wheat, rice. One variety can be crossed with another, to develop a hybrid.

So, how can we say that caste does not exist? In the absence of caste, there would be no identity. However, we have suppressed the underprivileged castes and prevented them from raising themselves in society. If you are offered a free servant will you not gladly accept him? Why should you pay him? If you are earning two to three thousand rupees per month, you could pay him five to six hundred rupees. However, you do not want to pay him, because you want to take advantage of him. If he marries tomorrow, you will fire him. Where will he go then? He may not have a house or land, but you will not spare a thought for that.

A lot of injustice has taken place in our society. The proof of it lies in the number of people who have converted to Islam and Christianity. In Munger, there was a man by the name of Joseph. He was a peon in the Union Club. We had to say, "Hello Mr Joseph, good morning," just because he was a Christian. Had the same person lived in a village, no one would have felt the need to even greet him. He acquired this status simply due to a change of religion.

Each and every person desires respect and status in life. If there is an illiterate woman from the village, do I have the right to shoo her away just because I am educated and she is not? No, she is one of us. We should treat her with as much respect as she desires and expects. In fact, more attention is due to this lady, because she is handicapped by her lack of education.

Reservation is a good thing in principle, but it has to be properly applied. We are talking of the principle only and not its application. We know the shortcomings of this principle when it is put into practice. The principle, however, is excellent; it will give the deprived classes a chance to rise out of the mire.

When I meet these people, I tell them, "Since the government has provided you with this opportunity in the form of reservation, you should use it for your benefit. Remember, however, that you must also learn to succeed where there is competition. If you become dependent on the government dole, you will never stand on your own two feet.

Reservation is not your right; it is your privilege. It is a facility which has been provided to you, which you should turn your back on as soon as possible.” If not this generation, at least the next generation should be able to say, “We do not want this privilege.”

In history, no civilization has learned to survive without struggle. Look at the British, they have spanned the continents. They have made their language the international language. English has become the one language which you are forced to speak whether you like it or not. It is impossible to function without it. They exported their entire culture throughout the world. They gave us etiquette, such as shaking hands and table manners. Your home is full of their household items. Their civilization has influenced the world.

On the other hand, you have not been able to popularize a language as ancient and evolved as Sanskrit, even in your own country. What is the measure of your strength? Although it has been accepted that Sanskrit is the most scientific and universal language, that its grammar is absolutely pure and perfect in every way, still you cannot accept Sanskrit in your own country as your national language. Whereas the English left people with no choice but to speak English. Such is the trait of a race which can struggle and survive.

Many people think that the reservation policy is unconstitutional and should be opposed. What do you advise?

When the reservation policy was defined by the great thinkers of our constitution, they fixed the term for its application and also specified that this term could be extended. This was done with the optimistic idea that, if given an opportunity, the deprived and downtrodden would rise above their situation within a few decades. However, this did not happen.

In the 1950s, when I went to Chennai, even a shopkeeper would shout at a shudra to go away, so that not so much as the air off the shudra's body was inhaled by him. Money, even currency notes, accepted from the shudra were washed in water. In Sitamarhi, I stayed in the house of a kayastha, whose mother would wash firewood, possibly chopped by a shudra,

before using it. She would even wash the clothes brought in by the dhobi. I once asked her, “Do you also wash the sugar?”

We have all defaulted. The entire population from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari is guilty of this idiocy. Our country has had leaders of stature, belonging to various castes, who ruled over the hearts of the masses. However, should a thakur, brahmin or kayastha, fall in love and marry a girl from a different caste, there is mass furore. What is so extraordinary about this? It is a marriage between a man and a woman, not between a man and a horse!

Amongst the four castes, the brahmins used to rule, but as soon as the kshatriyas took up the sword, they grabbed their rights. The brahmins, however, were clever and said, “All right, you can be the king and we will be the prime ministers”, knowing that the real power lies with the prime minister. Then came the vaishyas with financial powers. So, again the brahmins said, “Fine, you be the financial advisers”, and included them in the fold. The remaining population became the working class, whom we call *shramjeevi*, and they are the majority. All revolutions the world over, have been initiated by them. The working classes of India, like the rest of its population, are basically simple people. Their nature has been tempered through the reading of the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Ramayana*.

To prevent our working classes from becoming destructive, it is imperative that our principles, our laws, should be in accordance with justice. If the majority of the population of this nation remains hungry and ill clad, there will be a rise in crime and other social disturbances, and you will be the cause of it. The prosperous will be insecure. Their daughters may be kidnapped and sold in the metropolitan cities for paltry sums of money. This should not happen.

What are your views on the Indian army?

The army is called the defence force and not the attack force. The code of conduct formulated for the Indian army says that it is a force for defence. Before the border is crossed, there has to be an official declaration of war in the parliament.

The decision has to be attested by the president who is the supreme commander of all the three wings of the Indian defence forces. Otherwise, no tank, aircraft or army personnel can cross the border and encroach upon foreign territory. Of course, if the army across the border enters our territory, then it is permissible to shoot them. This is the meaning of defence. We have a defence academy here. Defence means 'to protect ourselves'. It does not mean encroaching and attacking the opponent.

Our sannyasins have been invited by the army headquarters to teach the regiments yoga practices, especially pranayama and dhyana, in order to enable them to cope better in extreme climatic conditions. Our sannyasins have conducted yoga classes in Bikaner, Leh and also Siachen glacier. The temperature in Siachen glacier is minus forty, and due to the high altitude there is difficulty in breathing. We go there and teach them pranayama, so that the troops can function normally with a minimum amount of oxygen.

What is the right method of Om chanting?

The mantra *Aum* consists of three letters, two of which are vowels and the third is a consonant. The first letter is 'A'. When you say 'A' your mouth opens, when you pronounce 'M' your mouth closes. Between the opening and closing of the mouth, the sound is 'U'. The utterance of 'U' is a mixture of the 'A' and 'M' sound. Now, 'A' is the beginning, the sound or vibration of creation, and 'M' is the termination. Whatever lies in between is the manifest creation. Therefore, if you pronounce 'A', 'U' and 'M' there is an automatic pronunciation of *Aum*. Try it.

Civilizations come and go. How has the Sanatana dharma survived?

It is called *sanatan*, or 'eternal', because there is no break in it; there is continuity. One civilization arises, dies out and another appears. That is a break. If the civilization adapts itself according to the changing times, as is the characteristic of the sanatan culture, there is continuity.

To give an example, some years ago, girls did not go to school or to work. They could not talk freely, but now society is changing, because the needs are different. The girls go to school and study. They take up jobs, go to foreign lands, live alone or marry according to their choice. We have changed according to the times, and that is precisely why our culture has not died. Continuity has been maintained; there has been no break.

This means that the Sanatana dharma, which existed a thousand years ago, does not exist in the same form today. It has adapted according to the changing times. The only consideration required is whether or not the adaptations are in keeping with dharma, whether an act is dharma or adharma. *Dharma* means 'right action' and *adharma* means 'wrong action'. Is the education of girls wrong? Is the marriage of a high caste girl and a low caste boy wrong? Is it adharma? Is the decision of a backward caste girl, who becomes a lawyer, to marry a boy of high caste, wrong? Is it adharma to eat in a hotel that provides good food prepared by low caste cooks?

What is required is that you keep questioning whether what you are doing is right or wrong. When you are mindful of what is right and wrong, dharma and adharma are automatically taken care of. Then it is easy to shed old habits, rather than cling to them fanatically. If you are accustomed to wearing a dhoti, you should also be able to wear trousers, if need be, when going to work. What is the harm in wearing trousers? Is it adharma?

Women wore their hair down to the knees at one time; now they keep short hair. Does this issue have any connection with dharma and adharma? No, circumstances dictate these habits. Women are now joining the army, flying airplanes and helicopters, nursing, directing traffic. Their short hair is perfectly logical. Even where social behaviour, beliefs and interaction are concerned, it is correct to make changes after having weighed them on the scales of dharma and adharma. If what you are doing is right, do not fear.

Adaptability is the essence of Sanatana dharma. Because women became sati some ten thousands years ago, Sanatana

dharma does not say that the women of today should also become sati on the funeral pyre of their husbands. There was a time when this practice was prevalent. Madri, the wife of Pandu, and the mother of Nakula and Sahadeva, became sati. The society of that period expected this of its womenfolk. Today, society cannot accept this, especially in a democracy where the writ of the people says sati is a wrong practice.

Today, even the practice of asking a widow to wear white is wrong. Try asking a widower to remain continually in black, to go to the office in black and see if he obliges! Although, being the symbol of purity, white is the best colour to wear, there should be no imposition. Sanatana dharma has the inherent principle of adaptation to the changing situations and times. All the religions that have disintegrated in the course of time were those that failed to change with the times. Change, however, should not be haphazard. One has to be mindful of whether or not the change will produce positive effects on the family, society and nation.

Earlier, polygamy was practised. King Dasaratha had three wives. Bhima married the rakshasi, Hidimba, and later lived with Draupadi as her husband; that is, he was a shareholder of Draupadi also. Arjuna went to Assam and married Chitrangada. Sanatana dharma permitted polygamy in those days; now it does not. A man does not want many wives any more, because it entails asking his existing wife for permission. No one else's assent will do, not father or mother; only that of the person directly affected, the wife. In one hundred percent of the cases, the wife will refuse. This is the attitude these days, so now Sanatana dharma has stipulated monogamy as the dharma of every husband, the ideal code of conduct in the marital sphere.

Sanatana dharma is a culture in continuity, without a break. It does not maintain all the old traditions and beliefs. They may be completely changed, but you must always be aware of what is dharma and adharma. It is not adharma for women to sport short hair. It is a necessity, because they now have to work the entire day. They cannot afford to spend time washing and combing their hair, then leaving it open

all day like Bengali women do, and styling it in the evening. When will they work then? If a woman pilot has to bale out of the aircraft with a parachute, imagine what a disaster her long hair would create, getting tangled in the parachute! Mrs Indira Gandhi had to shake hands with people. Today women shake hands with men. What is wrong with it? Is it adharmā?

An engineer goes to England for important work. The minister there is a lady. Will he refuse to shake hands with her on the plea that his dharma does not permit it? He will be called uncultured and uncouth if he does. Suppose you go to a foreign country and at a grand banquet you start eating rice and curry with your hands. Will it be in keeping with the decorum? No, you have to use a fork, knife and spoon. It is not necessary to take alcohol; soft drinks are available also.

There is just one point I want to make, that Sanatana dharma cannot exist on old beliefs and values. It has to adapt according to current needs. For example, there is a rule that sannyasins should stay in one place during *chaturmaas*, the four month period starting from the month of ashaad, according to the Hindu calendar. However, I used to go out during that period without any restrictions, because I had to work in those months also. I had to deliver memorial lectures, attend seminars, hold classes. Now, of course, I have given up all this; I do not go anywhere.

One should be very clear about dharma and adharmā. If an Indian man marries a foreign woman, is there anything wrong in it? No. This is Sanatana dharma. It asks you to dress according to the season. Wearing warm clothes throughout the year will not do. In summer you will have to take off your sweater.

In India, we had the tradition of *swayamvara*, where the girl selected her life partner. Sita chose her own partner. It was not by Janaka's wish that she was married to Rama. Similarly, Draupadi married by her own choice, not by Drupada's choice. However, the time came when parents had to marry off their daughters, such were the social circumstances. Parents, brothers, wise men were entrusted with this task. Nowadays the girls are educated and they tour foreign countries on their

own. Still, ninety-seven percent of the parents worry about their daughter's marriage. This does not make sense. In the earlier days, due to ignorance, lack of education and social turmoil, even the wives of kings were not safe. Therefore, it was necessary for parents to find a match for their daughters. However, if your daughter studies at university or works in New York, why do you need to worry about her marriage?

There was a girl in Mumbai who used to export readymade garments. Her parents stayed in Mumbai also, but she lived alone in a separate flat. Her parents would sometimes ask me to tell her to visit them. I said, "Why should she visit you? She likes to live alone and she is not illiterate." Whenever I went to Mumbai, I would stay with her because she had a separate room for me. Now, she lives in New York and runs her own establishment. Her business has a turnover of millions of dollars per annum. Sanatana dharma does not advocate negotiating dowry and worrying about the marriage of such girls. It says, discriminate between right and wrong, dharma and adharma, taking into consideration the changing times.

Let me give you another example. When someone died, we used to take him to the cremation ground on the banks of a river. Now, we have electric crematoriums. People oppose it, because our shastras say the body must be burnt on a wood pyre. The shastras say that only because when they were written, there were no electric crematoriums. Had there been any, they would have been accepted by the shastras also. To reject a new concept simply because it is not mentioned in the Vedas or in the *Manusmriti* is wrong. Sanatana dharma means continuity; it does not mean that everything will remain the same.

We have also imbibed many Muslim customs. Purdah was not a part of sanatan culture. In the vedic culture, purdah did not exist. There was no imposition of any kind on the women in vedic society. Lopa Mudra, the daughter of Bharadwaja Muni, was living with Rishi Agastya. When Vishwamitra came to the ashram of Agastya, she wanted to live with him, but he declined the offer. Such was the social climate of those times. When Rama went off to the forest, Sita was implored

to stay back, because she was tender and delicate. This shows that women were held in great respect. Later, we were faced with political conditions due to which the women had to be brought indoors and put behind purdah. This was done so that no one would know how beautiful the wife or daughter were, because that would invite trouble. Now, women are again being asked to throw off the purdah.

The distinction between dharma and adharma must be made, keeping two points of view in mind, loka and paraloka. When one considers from the perspective of loka, one thinks in terms of the society, family and nation, which action would affect whom and in what way. Consideration from the viewpoint of paraloka is also imperative, because adharma in life does affect the next life, just as the seed which is left behind when the paddy plant dies affects the next crop.

What is dharma? The shastras have specified that the first definition of dharma is *paropakar*, doing good towards others. There is no religion higher than service to humanity, and no sin greater than causing harm to others. While living with your parents, children, friends or neighbours, if you are constantly aware of their needs and working for their welfare, it is called paropakar. It has many names. This is dharma. Causing pain and suffering to others is adharma. This is the definition.

What are some of the different ways of achieving mental peace in the family?

I can only speak to you on the basis of what I have heard from others, because I have never suffered from mental disturbance in my life, not even for a single moment. I have always remained happy and carefree. The reason for this is my attitude of total acceptance of whatever situation I have come across in life. I accepted the parents I received and the circumstances that I was raised in. I accepted the guru I came across. I had no choice in these matters. For mental peace, two things are necessary: one is acceptance of one's situation in life, and the other is bhakti, devotion to the Lord. I am not talking of *pooja*, external worship. Bhakti means 'love for God', in the same way that you love your wife or your sisters.

What if bhakti does not come naturally?

Does food without salt have any taste? In the same way, life without bhakti is also tasteless. A man without bhakti is similar to an unclothed woman bedecked in beautiful jewellery. Where is the beauty? Life without bhakti is like halwa without sugar, or upma without salt. Life without bhakti is incomplete. Nothing is more precious in the world than bhakti. It is more precious than gold, diamonds or pearls. Moreover, it is very rare. Where there is bhakti, there is peace of mind.

There is no factory which manufactures peace of mind. Bhakti is a state in which there are no worries, likes, dislikes, love, hatred, anger or lust. When you are in equanimity, the mind is indifferent to money coming in or going out, to praise or criticism. Whether your son obeys you or not, you are at peace. Peace means acceptance of life. The attitude of bhakti is: 'I have left everything in your hands; it is up to You to take me towards success or ruin.'

Another way to attain peace is through satsang. A sick man goes to the doctor for a checkup and accepts whatever medicine he is prescribed, whether homeopathic, allopathic or ayurvedic. Similarly, the man whose mind is sick needs to go to a doctor. The doctor here is the guru, saints and sages. The medicines prescribed are the inspirations and truths received in satsang. Satsang definitely works. Its effect shows up after one, two or three doses. When fifty bullets are fired, one will surely hit the target. In *Ramacharitamanas*, Shiva says to Parvati:

*O Parvati,
The Vedas and Puranas proclaim
There is no gain like that
Of being in the company of saints.
But that is also not attainable
Without the grace of God.*

Further on, Tulsidas prescribes the cure for mental and psychological diseases. He says:

*All the maladies are cured
If, by Rama's grace,*

*A favourable situation is created –
A holy guru is available as a physician
And there is utmost faith in what he says
And there is abstinence from sense enjoyment.
Devotion to Rama
Is the life-giving herb,
And the vehicle of this medicine
Is intellect full of intense faith.*

I have spoken of three methods to attain peace: first, acceptance of life, second, bhakti or devotion towards the Lord, and third, satsang. However, I can also tell you that in this world no one is at peace. Nobody's mind is steady, not even for a minute. If you look carefully within yourself, you will find that your mind is unsteady because you enjoy being in that state. When your mind begins to calm down, you become fearful.

In meditation classes, it is common for people to experience fear when their mind becomes calm. In meditation when the mind starts to become one-pointed, a strange fear grips the practitioner. Even a knock at the door can startle you. In contrast, when you sit comfortably to let loose your imagination and weave a web of illusions, it is a pleasurable experience. Man loses himself in that pleasure. So, actually man wants to remain mentally disturbed. It is a kind of preoccupation.

Can a guru take on the karma of the disciple?

In the world, particularly in India, there are many sadhus and mahatmas who take on other people's karma. Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda and also Adiguru Shankaracharya are some examples. There is a long list of such saints who have taken the karma of others in order to free them. In this case, the disciple would then become free of his karma, be it illness or something else.

There are also sadhus like myself who do not want your karma. I say, "Face it yourself! You default, so you pay for it." Taking on the karma of another is not something I am

able to do. This is my conviction today, it may change later on. I do not even pray for anyone. First, you make a mistake and instead of reaping the results, you tell me to face the consequences of your doing. My principle is that every man should face the consequences of his own karma.

Some mahatmas think differently. I understand their principle, but I will not follow it, because I am a man with modern ideas. I advocate that every person should face the consequences of his own actions. Let the joy be his and the sorrow too. Removing people's illnesses in a flash, making them millionaires in a flash is not something I will do. Whether or not I can do it is a different issue. Even if I can do it, I will not, because a man who does not have to face the consequences of his actions becomes weak. For every small illness, for every small requirement, he will come running to the guru. "Guruji, my son is not getting married." "Guruji, my son has been married for three years, but he does not have a child." What can I do about it? If you want a child, you have to find the way. Today there are so many ways. Now, people are having surrogate babies. You can rent a womb, borrow a womb!

Satsang 6

November 19, 1994, Afternoon

Earlier, I advised people, but no more. Since you are here, I am chatting a little for your entertainment. Normally, I do not believe in this either, because it is a major hindrance to my sadhana. A paramahansa should not meet people, give discourses or accept dakshina. He has to interact only with one entity, God. Swami Brahmanandaji explains:

*I am interested only in God,
If the world is displeased, let it be so.
If the family, sons and wife,
And sinfulness of the world are being abandoned
Due to remembrance of the Lord,
Let them be abandoned.
Sitting in the company of saints,
Let me do good to myself.
If people are interested in sense enjoyment,
Let them do as they please.
There is a profound desire in my heart
To meditate upon the Lord.
If the interest in sense enjoyments
Is going to be lost, let it be so.
The pitcher of sin placed on my head
Has been given such a push by my revered guru.
If it is dashed by Brahmananda and broken, let it break.*

The whole world can complain about me. I do not mind. I have been sent here for a specific purpose. Did I know

about the existence of this place? I was given the address not by man, but by God. Before reaching this place, I saw it in a vision.

At that time, I was in Tryambakeshwar, near Nasik. It was the 8th September. Swami Satsangi arrived from Munger. I asked her to go and buy the land immediately. The title transfer was done on the 12th September, within four days! Other properties acquired here at the insistence of the owners have taken over a year to finalize. So you see, I was sent here. Initially people used to scale the walls and come in uninvited. That is why I keep Bholenath. Everyone here has been stamped by him.

This year, my panchagni sadhana of five years has come to an end. Agni is now installed within me to make it continuous. Initially it was a raging fire, now it is calm. When one round of anushtana ends, the people in the neighbourhood are given prasad. That is why I asked you to bring clothes, toys and blankets.

In the month of Paush, lists containing details of every family will be made in consultation with the village chief. Every house has a number and all the details about each family, caste, etc. will be entered into the computer. We do not give charity; it is prasad. Different types of rishis gave different prasad. There are rajarishis, devarishis and brahmarishis. I am a rajarishi. I have spent my life in ease and comfort. Earlier I lived a 'five-star' life. I travelled first class in aircrafts and never went through the immigration section. I would step out of the aircraft into the car and drive off in comfort. The agent would clear my passport for me. I always had a secretary with me and a small computer diary containing hundreds of telephone numbers. Such was my life.

Goddess Laxmi has told me, "Son, as long as you tread the right path, I will come whenever you call me. The moment you default, I'll be off." So I am afraid of displeasing her, though I am not really worried, because Laxmi is the mother. I feel that she should not be called directly, because if she comes, it will be on her personal vehicle, which is the owl.

Now, the owl cannot see during the day, so one does not know where it may end up while carrying her to your home. To avoid these risks, I have decided that I will serve Narayana in order to call Laxmi. Since she is devoted to her husband, wherever Narayana goes, she accompanies him. Vice versa may not be true; wherever Laxmi goes, you may not find Narayana!

So, worship Narayana first, in whichever form you wish. If you worship Shiva, Parvati will accompany him. That is why I greet people with, “Namo Narayana”. Narayana is the shakti behind creation. Narayana and Laxmi are one. To call only Laxmi is risky. If I direct all my tapasya towards calling her, there will be a lot of money, but money and wealth are as variable as the water current. Laxmi is like the broken waves of water on a restless ocean. It has been said:

Wealth is as fickle as the waves of a river.

Life is as momentary as electricity.

O Lord, the refuge giver, protect me now,

Protect me, I am under Your shelter.

A lot of prasad items have come. In the month of Paus, we will make out the list of beneficiaries. Cricket bats and stumps have come, which we will give to the local cricket team in Rikhia. When a football comes, we will give them that also. You all have come in the month of Agahan which is a very special period. Agahan is known as Marga Sheersha. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Lord Krishna has said, “Among the many months, I am Marga Sheersha!”

Sita was married to Rama during this auspicious month. It is the best of all the months, and that is why I have called you all at this time. When the next anushthana is completed, I will call you again.

What is the exact meaning of sannyasa?

In Sanskrit, the word sannyasa is comprised of two roots. Sam is a preposition, and nyasa means ‘trust’. For example, I have fifty thousand rupees. I open a trust with this money and declare that it will be used to buy medicines for others.

Now, that fifty thousand rupees is not mine anymore. The trust controls the money and it will not be spent on me. The money will be spent only in fulfilling the aims and objects of the trust.

Similarly, a householder or *grihastha* earns a livelihood for his family, wife, children, parents and himself. One day he decides to utilize his abilities, money, intellect and emotions for a particular cause, for example, spreading yoga. Thus, he directs all his resources in this one direction, which means he creates a trust. He is no longer working for his wife, children or parents. Whatever knowledge and skill he has is being utilized to spread yoga worldwide. His aim and object has been fixed. Others might have different aims, such as attainment of self-realization or liberation. Investing all of one's resources and facilities, in the form of a trust, to achieve a higher purpose, a noble aim, that is *sannyasa*.

The *Bhagavad Gita* (18:2) defines another aspect: 'If you renounce the karmas which are prompted by desire, that is *sannyasa*' There are three types of karmas: *nitya*, *naimittika* and *kama*. All these lead to a result or fruit of action. When you renounce any right over the fruits of action, that is *sannyasa*. For example, while staying at my guru's ashram, I constructed buildings and developed it, but I never got any personal gain.

This implies that one can stay simultaneously in *grihastha* and *sannyasa* ashramas. Can a married person also be a *sannyasi*?

Yes, that is possible. All the ancient rishis and munis were married. Only after the spread of Buddhism were *sannyasis* forbidden to marry. *Sannyasa* is one of the four ashramas. People normally retire at the age of fifty. They should take *sannyasa* after that, otherwise they will develop heart condition, high blood pressure, etc. During the retirement period, they should live in solitude, do self-study and prepare for the next life, the next journey on the earth.

It has also been seen that a married person can live like a *sannyasi*, even while carrying out his worldly duties. The

ancients had perfected this. Vashishta and other rishis were married, but they were saints of a very high calibre. However, their children did not have the same calibre, and the quality gradually diminished with succeeding generations. When the son starts loafing around, who is there to correct him? The rishi remains detached like a proper sannyasi, and does not tell his son how to behave. The son takes money and wastes it on frivolities. The devotees come and touch his feet, as he is the guru's son. The son, however, is spoilt and does not have the father's spiritual qualities. So, the sages have said that one who leads a public life with public support and sympathy should not have a private life.

What is the necessity of human existence? It is said that the whole universe is a manifestation of God. In the beginning we were one and in the end we become one, so why this multiplicity in the middle?

The only need of human existence is to become a medium for God's lila, or play. The one never becomes many. Tulsidas says in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*This is the fruit of having this body –
You should remember Rama, abandoning all desires.*

To give an example: the power produced by one generating station lights bulbs in so many different houses. Electricity is the same everywhere, but when it manifests in the form of a bulb, fan, refrigerator, etc. then you see many instead of one. The many are in the manifestation, not in the *tattwa* or element. Even today, the supreme element or atma is only one. You see many because of its varied manifestations. This subject has been referred to in the *Kathopanishad*. Yama explains to Nachiketa:

*As fire takes up different forms
While burning different things,
Likewise the soul, living within everybody,
Takes different shapes outwardly.
God and the soul of all living beings*

*Are one and the same,
But from that one, he becomes many.
The wise man who realizes God within himself
Gains eternal bliss, but not others.*

You can make different ornaments, such as bangles and necklaces, out of gold. The element gold remains the same, but both manifestations then have different names and forms. Manifestation occurs when an element assumes a name and a form. Gold is an element, and whatever ornaments are made out of gold have different names and forms. They are its manifestations. The multiplicity of manifestations does not imply multiplicity of elements or tattwas. Let us take the example of cotton. Cotton is the root element from which you can make different clothes, like shirts, dhotis, saris. This variety or multiplicity is in the manifestations, which are temporary in nature. The shirt will tear and cease to exist one day, but the tattwa is not temporary.

Satya, or truth, is a tattwa or element. The primary tattwa is atma, God or whatever name you wish to call it. I call Him Narayana. In *Srimad Bhagavata*, Brahma says to Devarishi Narada:

*Matter, karma, time, one's nature and jiva
Are not different from God.
The Vedas are wholly dedicated to Narayana,
The gods are born on the wings of Narayana,
The other worlds are also Narayana
And all the yajnas are meant for Narayana.*

In my present birth, I exist in this form. What was I before I was born, and where will I go when this life ends?

I do not know. When I come to know, I will tell you. So far, nobody has been able to give an answer to this question. The rishis and munis have not answered it in the whole of the Puranas, nor in the *Rigveda*, *Mahabharata* or *Ramayana*. In *Darshan Shastra*, Indian philosophy, 'what happened before this' is called *anavastha dosha*, ad infinitum.

There is an Arabian story in this context. A king announced that everybody would have to tell a story without an end, otherwise their heads would be severed. One day, an intelligent man thought up an endless story. He told the story for a thousand days. The king went on listening. What was the story? The story was about a bird taking a grain from a big pile and flying away. What next? Then another bird picks up another grain and flies away. So the story went on and on. The king asked, "What comes next?" The man replied, "Let the grain be finished first." The king said, "It is enough," gave him a reward and let him go.

So, this was an endless story. Time has no end. It is called *shashvat*, eternal. Similarly, creation has no end. Beyond this solar system there are other galaxies or solar systems. If you talk of this creation having a beginning and an end, that is a fallacy. You cannot say that this infinite creation has started here and finished there. It never began nor will it ever end.

Desha, place; *kaala*, time; and *vastu*, substance; are the three parameters of creation. *Desha* and *kaala* have no boundaries, no end. Why no end? Because creation is the gross manifestation of *Parameshvara*, God. He did not make this creation; He became the creation. You might have read in the Upanishads, that God transformed Himself into creation; this entire universe is a manifestation of God Himself.

God is immanent and transcendent. God is a part of this creation and beyond it also. This is the distinctive feature of Indian philosophy and Sanatana dharma; no other religion accepts this fact. In the *Chandogya Upanishad*, Aruni explains this point to his son Svetaketu:

*O gentle soul, different vessels made of clay,
Having different names are, in fact, clay.
Their nomenclature is simply a changed form of speech
Only for the sake of convenience.*

Educated people in the West, who have read my books and been exposed to Eastern thought, have started accepting this, but their religions and philosophies do not accept it. They say God is not omnipresent; for example, Mohammedans

state that Allah stays in bahista, while Christians talk of God in heaven.

Once I had a heated argument with a Christian missionary in Jaipur. He said, "You say that God is everywhere. No, this can't be true. It is not written in the Bible." I said, "It is not in your Bible, but it is in my Bible." He was an *adivasi*, a tribal, and he became very angry. I do not have the habit of quarreling with people, but I told him, "Brother, what do you lose by accepting this as true? The primary element, which you call God, is present everywhere in equal measure."

In the *Chandogya Upanishad*, there is a very nice illustration regarding this in the form of a dialogue between Udalaka, Aruni and Svetaketu: Udalaka asked Svetaketu, "The ocean is there, isn't it? Take some water from it." Svetaketu took some water. Udalaka asked, "How does it taste?" Svetaketu replied, "Salty." Udalaka said, "Okay, go over there and take some water. How does it taste?" Svetaketu said, "Salty," and it went on like this. Just as the entire ocean is salty and salt is everywhere, in the same way, the entire creation is pervaded by the presence of the Lord.

Many sweets are made of milk, ornaments of gold, and clay pots of earth. In fact, the nomenclature is simply a changed form of speech. Only the clay is real. Whatever name we give is an alteration of the actual truth. The truth is milk, gold or earth, as the case may be. We say all things exist within creation: sun, moon, tree, man, elephant, crow. But these names, which have been produced through our mouth by speech, are a distortion, an alteration, a *vikara*, of the actual reality. This is a distinctive feature of Indian philosophy. You will not find this reasoning in other philosophies, whether Greek, Chinese, Western or Confucian.

Now, in the West, many thinkers have been veering toward this viewpoint. God is one; God is everywhere. We have made monists out of everyone. Swami Vivekananda's lectures, the teachings of Ramakrishna, Sri Aurobindo and other masters who have gone to the West, have made this change possible. Moreover, whatever philosophy we talk about, is always logical and is backed by rational arguments, *tarka sammata*.

The Western thinkers are ready to argue logically: How can you accept that one day God suddenly made this world? If the world was not there, what was there before? *Shoonya*, void? Where was God at that time, in the void? So we have the concept of eternity and infinity, *shashvatastava* and *anantavada*. Indian philosophy has gifted these two invaluable concepts to the learned people of the world. Scientists like Einstein, Newton and Max Planck have acknowledged this. The great thinkers of the West also accept that Indian philosophy is based on logic.

Isn't it said that the universe began fifteen billion years back?

Okay, the universe was created fifteen billion years ago, but what was there before that? There must have been something. Can you indicate a day when time began fifteen, twenty, thirty billion years ago, and after so many years when will time stop? Regression, ad infinitum, is called *anavastha dosha*. There is a new definition given in *Yoga Vashishta* called *kalpanavad* and it is akin to Hegel's theory, which is part of Western philosophy.

When Rama came home from gurukul, the guru's teachings had cast a deep impression on him. Vashishta had taught him asana, pranayama, kundalini yoga, etc. He also used to explain in a philosophical vein that this world is illusion. The other students took all this normally, but Rama took it to heart and started thinking deeply about it. From morning to night, he used to sit alone in a corner. His father, Dasaratha, had expected his son to join him in his royal duties, but no, Rama was sitting alone, doing nothing. So, he asked him, "Why do you not come to the office?" Rama replied, "What is the use? This world is illusory and transient."

Dasaratha, who was growing old, got very worried. He feared that Rama might become a renunciate, a sannyasi, or that he was becoming mentally unsound. So, he went to Guru Vashishta and told him about his conversations with Rama. He said, "Now, Rama is talking about sannyasa. I got Rama after conducting the Kameshwar Putreshti Yajna. I had expected that he would help me rule the kingdom, but he says that

the world is unreal, so what is the point of earning money, becoming a king, getting married, etc?”

Guru Vashishtha then called Rama and gave him some advice which is recorded in the book *Yoga Vashishtha*. Rama asked one question after another. He was not a person who would sit quietly. He was an *avatara*, an incarnation of God, and the holy Vedas and Puranas were a part of his breath. Guru Vashishtha answered his questions one after the other and clarified his doubts. He answered questions about time, existence, karma. Why should man perform karma even though he has to die one day? What is *tyaga*, renunciation, and so on?

In the end, Rama realized that this whole world is a dream. He reasoned that, “If this is all a dream, what does it matter if somebody shoots me or steals my money from the cupboard. Since this world is all a dream, I may as well get married to Sita and do the work of a king. It does not matter!” So, in *Yoga Vashishtha*, there is mention of this world as a long dream.

Life is a dream, and you experience pleasure and pain in this dream. You go on experiencing the dualities of joy and sorrow. There is no escape from it, as you are not in control of the dream. When you wake from your dream, the sorrow and misery will automatically leave you. But what is the way of awakening from this dream? Rama understood and started his *lila*, divine sport. He became involved in day to day activities and began attending his office.

How does one realize that the world is a dream?

One can realize this only when the eye of knowledge opens. The enjoyment of pleasure is transient; it lasts only for a moment. Whatever relationships I may have, my likes and dislikes, marriage, happiness, sorrow and death, they are all a dream. Who opens the eye of knowledge? The guru, but a very special guru. Any guru cannot do it.

Tulsidas says in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*Is spiritual knowledge possible
Without the guru?*

*And is spiritual knowledge possible
Without detachment?
Can happiness be gained
Without God?
Such is declared in the Vedas and Puranas.*

How and when does one attain birth as a human?

It is said that one reaches human birth after going through eighty-four lakh *yonis*, lower births, lower forms of existence. We read in science about these different forms of life. The scriptures also accept evolution, transformation from a lower form of life to a higher form; eighty-four lakh *yonis* is just another way of saying it. It is possible that today there are more than eighty-four lakh; the number may have gone up!

When will you be born in the West?

I will not be born in the West. If I am born at all, I will be born from the womb of a mother who will tell me at the moment of birth, “O son, you are pure, enlightened and beyond the maya of the world. I give you sannyasa; you will not marry!” *Shuddhosi, buddhosi, niranjanosi; samsara maya parivrajitosi*. I pray to God that I get a mother like this. I do not want a mother who would like me to get married and lead a normal worldly life. *Ek Niranjan, Do Gadabad, Teen Latapat, Char Chaupat, Alakh Niranjan*. This means: ‘One implies purity; two implies trouble; three implies complication and four means foolishness.’

How is it possible to make marital circumstances more favourable?

You have to compromise and adjust. First you adjust, then your partner will adjust to you. If you want him to adjust to you, and he wants you to adjust to him, then you will go on having trouble. If you want him to love you, and he wants you to love him, both are wanting love, but nobody is giving love! This is very simple logic.

When will we stop looking back and giving importance to past events?

This is a distinctive feature of humanity. The science of remembering and recording past events is history. History should always be kept in view in order to compare past and present, and learn what mistakes were made, so that we do not repeat them. We learn a lot from history, but this is different to superstition.

There are people everywhere in the world who are extremely backward and conservative, even in this modern age. In Europe, where some of the best scientists of the world reside, there is so much blind superstition. There is a lot of witchcraft in England and France. They say that spirits live in tunnels under the cities. Nobody wants a house with the unlucky number thirteen. Apartments and flats do not have number thirteen; there is ten, eleven, twelve, fourteen, but not thirteen. I am talking of people who are exposed to modern science and have the objective world of science before them.

Do rational people often believe in superstitions?

Yes, this is a peculiar characteristic of human beings. Man might use a computer, but that does not prevent him from having 'old world' ideas and superstitions. In some places, if a French girl marries a German boy, her head is shaved. In Greece, if villagers come to know that a widow is having an affair, then the couple is brought to the village square and stoned to death. Man is rational in one aspect and superstitious in another.

Sixty kilometres from Barcelona, there is a place called Montserrat which has a very old church of the Black Madonna, where a small black image of Goddess Kali is enshrined. I will tell you how the statue became black. Centuries ago, when Muslims attacked that place, a mendicant saved the image of the Madonna and kept it in his cave. He used to light a fire in the cave, and the image blackened from the smoke of the fire. When the kingdom of Spain was re-established, the Madonna was put back in the original church.

Now this church has become a very famous pilgrim centre. Thousands of people go there every day to pray for something, a son, a daughter, wealth, from the 'Madre' or Mother. These are educated, intellectual, socially established people, who go there for this purpose. They would say, "I asked for something there and I got it. Why do not you also ask?" It is a similar story at the Tirupati temple of South India.

Are people becoming more intellectual these days?

One aspect of man is rational and intellectual, but he has heart and emotions also. I keep on repeating this everyday. The heart is the centre of emotions, with which you love, hate and envy others. Anger does not come from the intellect; it comes from the emotions. Love does not come from the intellect; it comes from the heart. So, man has two qualities within him, intellect and emotion.

Emotions are directly related to feelings. You treat some people as friends and some as enemies; this is related to feeling and emotion. You love your parents, give them respect and look after them, while you term other people as useless. This again is an expression of your emotions. The emotions and feelings make man religious or spiritual. The intellect can make man learned, a great scholar or mathematician, but it cannot make him religious or spiritual. Intellect can make you an Einstein or Newton, but not a bhakta, or a devotee. To develop bhakti, it is essential to develop your emotions, and keep them healthy and positive. Blind faith and experiential faith are manifestations of emotion and feeling. The poet Tulsidas says that goddess Bhavani and Lord Shankara are symbols of one's faith and belief.

*I bow down to Parvati and Lord Shiva
Who are embodiments of faith and trust.
Without them even the adept cannot perceive God
Although He dwells within them all.*

Blind faith is a label people have given to certain feelings. From my personal experience, I cannot call such feelings the result of blind faith. I have obtained a lot of enlightenment

from this so called blind faith. Actually, I have a lot of blind faith. I have just married a tulsi plant to a shaligram. I made all the arrangements with loving care. I got jewellery and finery and distributed sweets. What would you call this? An educated man marrying a tulsi plant to a stone?

Is there some meaning behind it?

I liked doing it. I do not know about meaning. I liked decorating the plant with flowers, and putting candles all around. I asked for only one boon, "Mother, as long as I can take your name with total devotion, keep me healthy."

*O God, while worshipping You
Let us hear auspicious words with our ears,
And see auspicious scenes with our eyes.
Let us be healthy and full of life.
While singing Your praise,
Let our life be spent in performing actions
That are in Your interest.*

The habit of asking has not gone?

One should not lose the habit of asking from one's mother. This is the normal relationship with mother.

*I do not hanker after liberation in fortune.
I do not like supreme knowledge
Nor enjoyment with beautiful ladies.
O mother, I implore You to grant,
So long as I am alive,
Remembrance always
Of the names Mridani, Rudrani, Shiva-Shiva and Bhavani.*

That is why I asked for complete health. If I fall sick for even one day, my anushtana gets disturbed and it breaks. While doing my sadhana for the last five years, I used to be apprehensive lest I got dehydrated, because the temperature in my seat used to go up to sixty or seventy degrees celsius. This was not easy, especially for a person used to air conditioning, but nothing adverse happened. I was not

indisposed even for one day, not even a sneeze! The Lord took care of me for five years. That is why I tell the Lord that, “The day my devotion to You wavers, take me away from this world with a heart attack.” Just as food is not tasty without spices, likewise human life is useless without bhakti. One could as well be a dog or a donkey. It has been said in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*In whose heart there is no devotion for Hari,
His life is like that of a dead body.
He who does not sing the name of God,
His tongue is comparable to that of a frog.
Speech is never decorative without the name of Rama.
Think it over, see it, abandoning pride and delusion.
O enemy of the gods, a beautiful lady
Adorned with ornaments but devoid of dress,
Can never be pleasing to the eye.*

What would your comment be about the marriage of a plant to a stone? You would say that it is like children marrying their dolls. But I like it so much that I sit there for hours, and my swamis like it even more. They ask, “When is the marriage?” Somebody telephoned from Dhanbad and asked, “Shall I send the marriage veil?” I said, “No, I will make it myself.” Then people sent many ornaments made with pure gold and diamonds. These I gave to the tulsi plant during the marriage.

Now, the girls in the village, who are recently married, come to me. As a sannyasi, in accordance with our tradition, I did not spend a cent on marriages and funerals. However, when the nearby wedded young girls return home, before they leave again for their husband’s place, I give them a fine sari, slippers, marriage necklace and gold ornaments. They are my daughters also. I like to do this. It feels good to love somebody, does it not?

Should the ishta devata always remain the same? Should one worship other deities?

If somebody tells you to eat only rasagulla but not gulabjamun or pera, that is not logical. Ultimately, these sweets are all

made of the same stuff, milk. Likewise, all the ishta devata's are from the same source. The One who is Rama, is also Krishna, Narayana, Devi. They are all based on one primary tattwa, one element. Your personal ishta mantra should be repeated morning and evening for a fixed time, one hour or two hours, but this does not stop you from worshipping Shiva, Hanuman or Ganesha. This is what I believe; you may have your own opinion.

*After coming to the world I looked hither and thither,
Only You were visible everywhere.*

What is the significance of the Baidyanath yatra?

Hygienically you may consider Baidyanath Dham as dirty, but spiritually it is very powerful. There are two aspects: the hygienic and the spiritual. Some take the hygienic aspect into consideration, but it is the spiritual that is more important.

During the month of Shravan, the richest of the rich and the poorest of the poor walk one hundred kilometres to Deoghar from Sultanganj, which is situated on the banks of the Ganga. They fill a gourd with Ganga water at Sultanganj and carry it here on their shoulders. It takes them three to five days to reach this place and during these five days, they dress like sadhus and live like sannyasins.

They are householders from different stratas of society: men, women and children, rich, poor, happy, unhappy, as well as people suffering mentally and physically. They carry the gourd of Ganga water on their shoulders for five or six days. They never place it on the ground. Throughout the journey, they repeat the mantra, *Bol Bam, Bol Bam, Bol Bam, Bol Bam*. When they arrive in Deoghar, they enter the temple and pour all the Ganga water on Lord Shiva. This tradition has been going on for so many centuries that, with the amount of water poured on it for so long, the shivalingam has flattened, as if it were thumped into the earth.

There are no religious barriers. Christians, Buddhists, Hindus; anyone can go on this journey. The entire government machinery stops functioning during this festival in the

month of Shravan. For one full month, all government officers have to attend lakhs of devotees, who arrive every day, walking those one hundred kilometres. They see to their security, food, shelter, places for hanging the water pots, provisions, vegetables, snacks. At that time, you cannot get a labourer here to work. They all set up stalls along the way to sell tea, food, shoes. They make enough money for the whole year in one month.

There are many rich people who walk on that road from Sultanganj. Because they are affluent, they send their servants ahead by car with cooking items, bedding and other necessities. When they arrive at the resting place, the servants are already there cooking and the beds are ready. The entire road becomes a walking street for that one month. Rich or poor, all have to walk as well as practise self-restraint, or sanyam, for that period. The diet has to be sattwic, without onions or garlic. The *yatris*, travellers, all have to sleep on the ground. They may use Dunlop, foam rubber or whatever, but it must be on the floor.

How can an ordinary person reach the point of total self-surrender?

Total self-surrender is known as *atma nivedan* or presenting yourself completely to God. It can also be called *atma samarpan* or self-surrender. This is the ninth and last stage of bhakti. As it says in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*Hearing, singing, remembering,
Service to His feet, worship, salutations,
Servant-like behaviour, friendliness
And surrender to Vishnu are the nine steps to bhakti.*

Lord Rama gave this sermon or *upadesh* to Shabari, because she had asked the same question. Rama said, “If you practise *nawadha bhakti*, the nine steps of bhakti, systematically, then you can reach a point of total self-surrender.” In the *Bhagavad Gita* (12:18–19) also, Krishna says, “He who is the same to friend and foe, and also in honour and dishonour, who is the same in cold and heat, in pleasure and pain, who is free from

attachment, to whom censure and praise are equal, who is silent, content with anything, homeless, steady minded, full of devotion – that man is dear to Me.”

Before self-surrender can take place, the entire personality has to be rearranged. Self-surrender is not just the thought that you want to surrender, it is an inborn quality. For surrender, you require innocence, but everybody has lost their innocence. The heart, mind and intellect have become tough and rigid. In order to soften your heart, mind and intellect, satsang is necessary for a sustained period of time. Satsang is a very powerful tool.

Then again, why should you be so tense about surrender? Surrender is spontaneous. If you want to rise, you have to use energy, force and strain. But if you want to fall down, you do not have to do anything. You do not need to use strength; instead you have to lose it and just fall down. The more worried you are about surrender, the less likely are you to attain it. Surrender happens spontaneously. Don't worry about surrender, worry only about satsang, bhakti and the discovery of your relationship with God.

What is your relationship with God? To decide this, you have several relationships to draw upon. The first relationship, which is between man and woman, husband and wife or lover and beloved, is very powerful; it can influence your bhavana totally. The second relationship, which is between brother and sister, is also very strong. The third relationship is that of mother and child. These three relationships are known as madhurya bhava, sneha bhava and vatsalya bhava, and you are familiar with all these. A famous Urdu poet, Nazir has written:

*The path of lover and beloved is ministerial,
Only lovers know the secrecy of being a fakir.
In this path, there is no tyranny,
No power, no praise, no prayer,
No barrier, no bondage, no force,
No freedom, no disciple, no guru,
No solitude, no habitation.
All the worldly things are forgotten,*

*No remembrance of the same.
Engrossed in delight, night and day,
High hopes are hinged on Him.
He is both treasure and benefactor.
There is always delight, laughter and richness.
After becoming a lover and carefree fakir,
What is the use of another love affair?*

The relationship between a brother and sister is directed by a particular bhavana called *sneha*, affection. The relationship between a man and a woman is directed by *madhurya bhava*. The word *madhu* means ‘honey’, ‘sweetness’. That is why the beloved is called sweetheart. Then comes *vatsalya bhava* which is the love of a parent for a child.

Now, if you consider God to be your father, it will not work. If you think of God as your father-in-law, mother-in-law or sister-in-law, you will worry. God will become the object of your worry. These relationships will not work; they are cold relationships. Tender and innocent relationships between God and man should be discovered by each one of us. You may ask, “But, how can I consider God as my husband?” Yes, He is my husband. Why? Because I am female. You are also female. We are all prakriti; we are not purusha.

We are all prakriti, feminine gender, and we have all the feminine qualities in us. *Mamta*, attachment, and *irshya*, jealousy, are both feminine qualities. All the qualities born of prakriti are feminine qualities and the qualities born of purusha are masculine qualities. *Tyaga*, *tapasya*, *itiksha*; renunciation, austerity, endurance; are all masculine qualities born of purusha. *Tyaga*, *sannyasa* and *vairagya* are masculine qualities, born of purusha. *Mamta*, attachment; *karuna*, compassion; *daya*, mercy; *sneha*, affection; *irshya*, jealousy; are all feminine qualities, and they are all in us.

The great lady saint, Mirabai, queen of Chittor, a kingdom in Rajasthan, became a bit psychotic. She thought that God was her husband. She left her kingdom and her husband. She went to Mathura and Vrindavan. There she

wanted to meet the renowned swami, Vijay Krishna Goswami, but his disciples said, “No, he does not meet women; he does not meet females.” She said, “What! Who is this other man? I thought there was only one purusha, one male. Where has this second male come from?” When Gururaji heard this, he was very impressed. He said, “Yes, according to the philosophy of Samkhya also, there is one purusha.” According to Samkhya, there is ananta, an infinite number, of prakritis, but only one purusha. Yoga is also a branch of Samkhya; it has been devised from Samkhya. So there is only one purusha, and we are all prakriti. Therefore, I am the wife and He is my husband.

Now, what should the basis of the relationship between husband and wife be? Intense love, bhakti. Sex is not the criteria between husband and wife. That interaction can take place between any man and women. You do not have to marry for that. Sex is not the deciding factor; that can take place anywhere, as it happens. The most important criteria is love. You are mine, I am yours, and we are the only two people. The rest of the world does not exist for us. We draw a line around us. You are the most beautiful, my dear. There is nobody else as beautiful as you. I forget that there are so many beautiful girls, because, for me, only you are beautiful.

That intense love in a worldly sense is called passion; in a spiritual sense, it is called *bhakti*. When my bhavana, my personality, unites with the personality of God, who is my husband, that is *maithuna*. It is written in the Upanishads, *Maithunam utpadayati*. That is the concept of purusha and prakriti, and that is precisely the concept even in modern physics. When time and space move from opposite directions to the centre, the nucleus, fusion takes place. When time and space come together at a particular point, an explosion takes place. In the same way, I am one element, *jivatma bhakta*, the devotee. When I think of God as Shiva, or as zero, my mind gradually unites with that object. When both unite at one point, an explosion takes place. So, why worry about surrender? Rabi Babu has written:

*Your lila is to be manifested in my life,
 This is why I have come to this world.
 All the doors of this house will be open,
 All the pride will be evaporated.
 In this world, full of delight,
 There shall be no possessiveness
 For any object.
 Only then will Your lila manifest in me.
 Then, drowned in Your love,
 All my desires will cease.
 No prop will remain except You,
 In this strange life of pleasure and pain.*

I heard a voice some five years ago and I followed it, because I liked it. It was to my liking, so I came here. But what if, at that time, I had heard the words, "Satyananda, go and marry!" Well, I definitely do not like marriage and I always pray that when I am born again and my first cry is heard, may my mother say, "O, son, you are pure, enlightened, stainless and beyond the maya of the world. I give you sannyasa; you will not marry!"

I want to be born of such a mother who has the guts to reject common ambitions. If she should tell me, "Satyananda, you go and marry," I would not like it. That means I fail in surrender; I do not follow her words because I do not like them. What is the test of surrender? The test of surrender is that, perhaps you will not be able to manage it. You want surrender, supposing you get it, what will you do? In surrender, everything is not beautiful, comfortable and pleasing. It is a trying situation, when God tries your true nature. Kabir has very aptly remarked:

*Kabir says that His is the house of love,
 Not the house of your aunt.
 Only he can enter here
 Who takes off his head
 And carries it in his hands.*

What sadhana would you suggest for depression, for someone who is suffering from a nervous breakdown?

If you had asked this question a few years ago, in Munger, I would have suggested some asanas, pranayamas, mudras, bandhas and kriyas. Now, however, I do not know what to give when you have depression, because that disc in my computer is gone. Now, the only thing I can talk to you about is bhakti. Your first question was nice: surrender, prayer, divine love, how to attune the mind with God, what is God, what are his forms? Those are the topics I have been thinking about and talking about.

In *Srimad Bhagavata* it states:

*One who seeks My bhakti
Should have nectar-like faith in My story,
Should always sing My name and fame,
Loyally worshipping Me, praying to Me, admiring Me.*

*Worshipping Me with love, bowing down to Me
With eight limbs touching the ground,
He should love and worship My devotees more than Me
And should see Me in all living beings.*

*All his actions should be for Me
His speech should sing My praise.
He should abandon all his desires
And surrender his mind to Me.*

*He should abandon wealth, enjoyment
And all other delights for My favour.
He should perform yajna, austerities, charity
Japa, spiritual resolves – all the sadhanas for Me alone.*

*O Uddhava, those who surrender to Me
Like this, develop bhakti in their hearts.*

So far as depression, blood pressure and nervous breakdown are concerned, my mind does not work anymore. You had better consult the swamis that have come here or go to Munger. Consult some yoga therapist. I am not a yoga teacher now. I am undergoing a change in my entire mental structure.

I am moving very fast. The past is becoming very hazy. You see, I know her so well, but still I had to ask, "What is your name?" So, things are becoming hazy and I am happy. I do not want to have anything to do with the past, and the future has not yet come. So, I am living in the present moment.

*Let my mind merge in You
And my head be Hardiwar for You.*

You see, there is only one path that is very beautiful and sweet, like pure water which passes through beautiful valleys laden with flowers. That is the path of bhakti, and it is so nice. The pleasure you get from the world is no pleasure at all. In bhakti there is only *ananda*, bliss. You do not even feel like sleeping because, if you sleep, you lose so many hours and cannot enjoy that ananda.

*Drink, drink the cup of the name of the Lord.
Be intoxicated by drinking and making others drink.*

Drink the cup of the Lord's name. You pour scotch and champagne into a glass, and after drinking that, you become intoxicated. You drink and you give it to others to drink, so that they may also become intoxicated. When they are intoxicated, they will think only nice things. When you drink alcohol, you break down the barriers. In the same way, when you drink the cup of the Lord's name, all the limitations and depressions are removed. I can talk to you about God's name now, but if you want to know about depression and nervous breakdown, it is better you go to a yoga teacher.

Satsang 7

November 20, 1994, Morning

Please tell us about your life. How did you decide to take sannyasa and after that, what brought you to this stage?

In 1947, I was in Lahore, at the time of partition, when India was divided and Pakistan was brought into existence. I was caught up there and I could not get out. Everything happened before my eyes; I saw it all from the top of the publishing house, where I was sent from Rishikesh to publish the books of Swami Sivananda. Seeing the turmoil, Swamiji arranged for my rescue. When I returned to Rishikesh, I found my name on the list of sannyasa candidates to be initiated on 8th September. I said, “No, I am not taking sannyasa.” What I had seen in Lahore had completely shattered my faith in religion, God, goodness and *karma*. I thought, “How could man behave like that?” It was horrible and obscene, beyond what a man can even think or describe.

I said to myself, “No, sannyasa is not for me,” and wrote a letter to a newspaper editor whom I knew in Lahore. He offered me employment and sent me four hundred rupees for travelling expenses, which was a lot of money in those days. I purchased pants, a good shirt, and whatever else was necessary, then I told Swamiji that I was going to leave. He said, “But I have put your name down for sannyasa.” I answered, “I am not going to take it!”

I did not take sannyasa on the 7th or 8th September. Everybody else had taken initiation except me. On the 9th, Swamiji called me and asked, “What is the matter with you?”

I said, “If I have to work, I can work at home. I did not come here to do karma; I came here to renounce.” Swamiji asked me, “What do you want to do?” I replied, “I want to go to Delhi or anywhere and get a job. I am good with a pen; I can write. I can be a correspondent, an editor or subeditor, a column writer or a feature writer.” My Guruji was very powerful. He explained, “Look here, if you go back, you will not be able to work out your karmas. You can only work them out here.” He then gave me one or two hours of good advice.

So, I stayed and took sannyasa on the 12th September. I was the only one whom Swamiji called and initiated on that day. He said, “If you go to the railway station three hours before the train is to arrive, what will you do?” I said, “I’ll wait.” He said, “You must wait then, because your train will come after forty or forty-five years.” I asked, “Can I go home in the meantime?” He answered, “But, if you go home, then you will not come back, because the shackles of maya are very strong there. Maya is more powerful than anything else.”

*A few people know that illusion and shadow are alike.
Both remain behind him who runs away from them.
But they come in front if he faces them.*

So, I stayed with Swami Sivananda and waited for forty five years. All that time, I was counting the days, and each day I tried to find out if my train had arrived or not. However, there was no signal up or down; nothing was happening. When the train comes, everything on the platform starts moving, but there was no commotion.

In 1983–84, I found that something had changed in me. At that time, I did not like to talk or to go to the classes. While travelling in different countries, I often used to think, “If this program is cancelled, well and good.” I experienced disinterest in these things. Instead the mantra used to arise automatically. In fact, I had to drive the mantra consciousness away in order to work. For example, at the airport, my mind would be so absorbed in the mantra that I might miss the

flight. Therefore, I had a secretary who would tell me when it was time to board. I knew then that the signal was down, and the train was about to arrive.

At the end of 1982, at Puerto Rico, I called Swami Niranjan and told him, "I'm leaving Munger. You have to come back and take charge of the institution." He said, "Well, if that is your decision, I will come. But if you ask my choice, I would rather stay here." That was his answer. Swami Niranjan came to Munger, not because of his choice, but because of mine. Who would leave America, a country of opportunities? But anyway, he had to come.

Since I have been in Rikhia, a lot of things have happened, and I am not able to stabilize my mind in the present context. Stability of mind comes at different points. The mind must be stabilized, therefore, I find that the more devotion I develop for God in a certain relationship, the better.

When I read *Ramacharitamanas*, the lovely story of Rama, about his utterances to Sita or his feelings in the absence of Sita, it impresses my feelings, my emotions, and I continue to identify with what is happening there. While reading about the life of Rama, we should become one with it, because God has no definite form. Every form is His form; every name is His name, and every place is His place. Of course, we can go to pilgrimage places such as Badrinath or Hardwar; to temples, holy places, sacred places, but God is here!

O seeker, where are you searching for Me?

I am within you.

I am not to be found in a temple or mosque,

In the Kaaba or at Mount Kailash.

I am not found in any ritual,

In yoga or in renunciation.

I am not found even in a goat or ewe,

In a knife or in a polar axe.

Neither am I in hide nor tail, in bone or meat.

I reside outside the town in a cremation ground.

If there is a real seeker

I will be available in no time.

*Kabir says, O brother, you can find Him
In the breath of breaths.*

While speaking about God, I do not know whether to say 'He', 'She' or 'It', because God does not belong to any of these categories. God is an experience, a very profound experience, which gives a blow to the mind, like an earthquake. You have to prepare for it gradually, as it takes time. Without His choice, without His wish, you cannot have this experience. Maya comes to you, because she wants you. Bhakti will not come to you unless God wants you. Whenever the awakening of bhakti takes place in you, it is the choice of the Lord.

*Dharma begets non-attachment
And yoga begets true knowledge.
The Vedas have declared
True knowledge is the giver of liberation.
But that which pleases me at once is bhakti,
Which gives pleasure to the devotees.
Bhakti is totally independent and without props.
True and Divine knowledge comes
Under the dominion of bhakti.
O friend, bhakti is incomparable
And is the root of all pleasures.
It is gained by the blessings of a saint.
O, Hanuman, now I am fully assured
That a saint is not available
Without the grace of God.*

No amount of sadhana will help you in this matter. Sadhanas are necessary for the body, mind and emotions: for physical, emotional and mental balance, but no path reaches Him! When you go from here to Mumbai by train, what do you do? You sleep, you take tea and snacks, but by taking snacks, you do not reach Mumbai. All these sadhanas are *bahiranga* sadhanas, external sadhanas, which we have to do because we belong to the domain of the world. We have a body, a mind, a nervous system, so we have to practise asana

and pranayama. Becoming one with the totality, however, is something different. After placing your suitcase on the train, you forget about who will carry it, because the train is carrying it.

There is a story about a villager who was travelling by train. He wanted to reach his destination very quickly. So he started running through the train. He said, "If the train is going sixty miles per hour and I am running twenty miles per hour, that makes eighty miles per hour." To run like that through the train is foolishness. To carry the load in the train, thinking, "It is my load, so I must carry it. How can the train carry it for me?" That is also foolishness.

*All the burdens of my life,
All my victories and defeats,
Are in your hands.
There is no difference between you and me,
I am a man and you are God.
I am in the grip of the world,
And the world is in your grip.
I never worship you,
But you never leave me.
Disfavor is mine;
Favor is yours.
All the burden of my life
Is in your hands.*

It has also been stated in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*He is well versed in virtue and most wise,
He knows well the principles of the Vedas,
He is learned and steady in battle –
That one, who remembers Rama,
Abandoning all deception.*

This means you have to feel the presence of God in different ways: the beauty of flowers, the melody of music, birds flying through the sky, deep, dense, dark forests with wild animals chasing each other. When you think about these beautiful images, you feel the presence of God. In this way,

you should delve deep into every aspect of your experience, and you will find God as a substantial and concrete reality.

God comes in different forms, and you have heard many stories about this. Sometimes you may have doubts, but you should never doubt that God gives darshan and can speak to you. Of course, I have heard Him speak, but I do not know how to reach Him. He reaches me whenever He wants to. If I want to ask Him something, I do not know His fax or phone number. So I have no way to contact Him, but whenever He wants to, He has contacted me.

What does the form of that contact take?

Speech. He speaks. He sent me here. When I was building Ganga Darshan, there was political opposition. Of course, I have never been in politics, I do not even speak about it, but certainly sadhus are a threat. People who can think positively along the lines of the Vedas, Upanishads and wisdom are all threats. But I was told, “This is your place”, and Ganga Darshan was built there.

What should one do to stabilize one’s mind?

The higher mind and the lower mind, the wretched mind and the virtuous mind, all the different types of mind have to be stabilized. Even a yogi or sadhu, who has attained great heights, or a rascal, who has sunk very low, need stability, because mind is energy and this energy gets dissipated at different spheres. Mind is energy, like an electromagnetic force, which gets dissipated. Whether you are vicious or virtuous, spiritual or benevolent, you have a mind and your mental energies are being dissipated. There is a beautiful composition by Tulsidas on this state of our mind:

*Such is the foolishness of mind:
Abandoning the Ganga of devotion to Rama,
In the desire for dewdrops.
Like the thirsty Chatak mistakes
A mass of smoke for a cloud,
Although there is neither rain nor coolness*

*And it only hurts her eyes.
A foolish hawk,
Seeing its image in a mirror,
Becomes totally unmindful of its beak.
Being made impatient
By painful hunger,
It pounces.*

At different levels, there are different sadhanas. At my level, I am also trying to stabilize the mind. Since coming here, I have been alright mentally and physically. For the last five years, I have done panchagni sadhana. During that time, I did not even sneeze; I did not experience a bit of laziness. My health has been perfect. My neighbours, however, have been disturbing me very much. They do not come to disturb me, but it is the unstable quality of my mind that disturbs me. That disturbance started on the day I heard the command within my mind: “Love thy neighbours as I have loved you. Give to them the comforts that I have given you.” Since I heard this message, every time I sit down, it comes to my mind.

I do not want to get rid of this thought though. It is a good thought, “Love thy neighbour as I have loved you”, because God has always loved me. He has been very kind. I have had no problems in my life. I taught people how to get rid of their constipation, but personally I do not know what constipation is. I taught people how to overcome so many problems I had never experienced myself. Insomnia; I don’t even know what it is; I sleep very well. I had no difficulty with money in my life. There was a period when I used to beg as a sadhana. I used to sit in Benares with an aluminium bowl and people would put something in it. I enjoyed moving around in different districts; I was not unhappy. But this thought, “Love thy neighbour”, has disturbed me very much.

In my third year here, I started purashcharana of my ishta mantra, one hundred and eight lakhs. It took me practically the whole year, eight to ten hours every day. I did not meet

anyone at that time. People used to phone, so I left a message that Swami Satyananda is in love with a girl and he does not want to come out. At the end of the purashcharana, I heard the command: "Give to your neighbours the same love and facilities which I have given to you." This is God's order. Now, when he has shown the way, how can I not carry it out? To give them clothes is not enough. That lady is donating a cow to some villagers. I do not want money from you. Purchase a cow and give it for them.

Money is not enough; money cannot buy love. I cannot purchase love and give it to somebody. I am waiting for a breakthrough, but it has not taken place. I have everything, the resources, the capacity, but I do not know what to do, and this is in my mind.

Now, you see my difficulty. You have your own difficulty, when you sit for meditation. It may not be the same as mine, you may have some other nagging thought. So, in every state of consciousness, the human mind is unstable. Even my mind is unstable, but I do not want to make it stable, because God has made it unstable.

I have a lot of negative thoughts. What should I do?

Let them come. What does it mean? If you get dysentery, it means that your stomach is upset. Will you fill your stomach or will you take lemon water? When you have an urge to vomit and relieve yourself, will you take sweets? In the same way, when you have negative thoughts, try to understand that some garbage is being cleaned from the mind. Let it come out and do not feel guilty about it. That is the important thing, because negative thinking is natural and you are not the only person with negative thoughts. No one should accuse you because of this. All people, even rishis, munis and yogis, have negative feelings, bad feelings, criminal feelings, anger, passion. They may not accept or confess it, and I do not want you to confess it. The garbage is there in man's mind, because it has not been cleaned out. If you clean it every day, you will have less, and if you clean it once a year, you will have lots.

How can we clean it out?

I cleaned the garbage out of my mind and threw it away. It took me forty to fifty years. When my hair started turning grey, then my flat got clean. If you want to spend this much time, you do it, but it is very difficult. Nobody's heart is pure. You will not find anyone in this world who has a pure heart. Everybody has worries, fears, jealousy, greed and hatred.

Everybody has a very funny relationship with God. When you want a child, when you want money, when you want to recover from sickness, you go to Shiva and ask Him. Of course, you cannot help it, and you are not the only person in the world who is doing this. The same applies to all, but do not hate yourself for it. Respect yourself, because you are not the only person with negative thoughts. Maybe you have fewer negative thoughts than I have.

However, you should practise Gayatri mantra every day. Gayatri is the brilliant, divine Mother. When you practise one or two rounds of surya namaskara, you should say, "You are brilliance; give me brilliance. You are ojas; give me ojas." The energy of the head is called *ojas*. Worship Lord Surya. The sun is brilliant, so you are brilliant. Good thoughts do not eliminate bad thoughts, but they balance them.

Our mind is very disturbed by desires. When will the day come when our desires will be fulfilled? What should we do until then?

Write poems and keep hoping. I kept hoping and that is how my life has passed away. The day my desire was fulfilled, I realized I had so many more desires inside. Yes, life is difficult and as you grow, you will find that life is also mysterious. The world is not a smooth road. Within the mind, intellect, heart and emotions, there is so much confusion and so much paradox. You are not able to understand life, because you are within it. If you go out of life, like myself, then it is easier, because you can see life from a distance. In the midst of life, it is difficult to make any proper judgements, assessments or calculations. This is the reason why everyone is going through the same experiences.

Life passes away trying to straighten the dog's tail. The hair turns grey and the final carnival begins.

What about a sannyasi?

Who bothers about a sannyasi? We are free. I am not going to think of anybody, nor should anybody think of me. A sannyasi is self supportive. I do not exist for your love and you should not exist for my love.

Would you comment on Indian dance?

I was exposed to dance and music very early in life, although there is no special tradition of this in my family. It happened when Uday Shankar came from Russia and started an Indian Cultural Center in Almora. At this center he gave dancing classes, just like one gives yoga classes. We children went there from time to time. Later on, I gave performances in Rishikesh and even in Munger, right up to 1966. Out of all the dance systems, I prefer Bharatnatyam. I like the grace of Odissi and the art of Bharatnatyam. I am not able to understand Kathakali, although I have studied it.

Once Lord Shiva and Parvati were dancing. Lord Shiva performed all the mudras and Parvati copied them exactly. Lastly, he tried Nataraja mudra, but Parvati felt shy, so that is the only mudra she does not do. In South India, there is a place called Mayavaram and there you will find a temple called Chiddambaram with a Nataraja. I went there. It is a very large and beautiful temple. They sing beautiful kirtans.

Why was Bihar School of Yoga established in a place like Munger?

Munger is not a place of simpletons; it is a place of tough people. Bihar is a state of challenges and, therefore, it has produced the personalities like Buddha, Mahavir, Gautama and Ashoka. Biharis place challenges at every step. But once they accept you, then you become their pride. They have helped to develop the Bihar School of Yoga in Munger. The whole credit goes to Bihar, from the chief minister, chief secretary, district magistrate, to the entire government. They

have not given any trouble to the institution over the last thirty years or more.

People of Bihar are known as Biharis. Biharis first test the stuff, and when they find it is reliable, they pick it up. That is why, in history, Bihar is a land of spiritual institutions and also of revolutionary thought, whether it is Buddhism, the greatest, or Jainism, the most beautiful religion. Buddhism and Jainism are atheistic philosophies and religions, where God is not the central reality. Can you imagine a religion without God? However, they are thriving and the theistic people, who believe in God, respect them because, at least, they talk sense. Two great logicians were also born in Bihar, Gautama and Vatsyayana, the propounders of Vedic Nyaya and Bauddha Nyaya.

Vidyapati, a great man of miracles, was born here in Bihar. Lord Shiva incarnated in his family as his servant, Ugna. Everyday he used to grind *bhang*, which is marijuana. You make a paste from marijuana leaves and add milk, opium seeds and rose petals. This drink is called *thandai*. There are many other ingredients you can add to it. In India, it is drunk during festivals, such as Shivaratri and Holi. Ganja is not a problem in India; we do not even care for it. Marijuana is a problem in the West, but it is not a problem here, because there is no law restricting it. We do not make much fuss about it. So, Ugna used to make bhang paste for Vidyapati and attend to him as a servant. Vidyapati was a poet who used to sing and write songs, which are very popular in Bihar.

There is also Greek blood in Bihar. Ashoka was half Greek. Chandragupta married the sister of Alexander the Great's general, Seleucus. After Alexander's death, Seleucus invaded India and came right up to Patna. He was defeated there, and he presented his sister to Chandragupta. So, there is Greek blood in Bihar; you find that some Biharis have large, protruding Greek eyes. In the Bhumihar community, many people have large eyes. If you make a list of the great saints, reformers, politicians, warriors and critics in Bihar, all the other states in India will lag behind in comparison. Most important, Sita is a Bihari; she was born in Mithila.

How does Sivananda Math construct houses for the tribal people?

Now, Sivananda Math has received a tractor and a truck. We use these for collecting sand from the river, as we do not purchase sand. We also make our own bricks for the construction of houses in the villages. Raghunath kutir is a model for the houses which Sivananda Math is constructing for many village people here. It is dedicated to Lord Rama. The villagers can keep cows and oxen on one verandah and the other verandah can be the kitchen. The aged parents will stay in one room, and the son and daughter-in-law will stay happily in the other. There is a verandah along the front side too. A model has been prepared and I have told the swamis how to construct it. The houses are made of mud bricks, so there is less expense. We also received a machine from Colombia for making mud bricks, which are unbaked, raw bricks. We do not fire them. Raghunath kutir is made out of mud bricks. It is small but comfortable. The cost is forty thousand rupees, which is nothing for a house of that dimension, and it is environmentally friendly.

Does Ganesha stay here with you?

I shift to Raghunath kutir on Kartik Poornima. This is Ganesha kutir. It belongs to Ganeshaji. I am his guest these days. He allows me to stay with him. He says, "Okay boy, stay here with me for four months and make food for me." So, I make his food. When you worship Ganesha, you must be sure that your kitchen is nice. He likes sweets. He does not like khichari. He wants exotic delicacies.

I have four different Ganeshas belonging to different castes. Now, one more Ganeshaji has come from Italy; his name is Ganesha Piccioni! I will establish this Ganeshaji in Raghunath kutir. I do not know if Ganeshaji and Ramji will fight or not. Ramji is a very serious, sober man. He speaks the truth and thinks twice before he speaks. Krishna speaks untruths and never thinks twice. Ramji thinks twice before speaking the truth, keeping in mind that no one should be hurt. These are two character types, and the character of

Ganeshaji is to eat the whole day. His diet is *vaishnava*; he is vegetarian. Ramji was a hunter; he used to hunt in the forest.

Once a God is established in any form, he becomes the tantric God. Tantra makes very clear the need for yantra, mantra and mandala. *Mantra* is the form of sound and *yantra* is the form of a symbol. There is also a three-dimensional form and this is *mandala*. Ganeshaji is a mandala. The *murti*, or statue, is a mandala. You can call it an archetypal symbol. Ganeshaji is my *gurubhai*, guru brother, and it is a privilege for me to live with him. He is my *gurubhai* because I am a worshipper of Shivaji, and Ganesha is his son. We are both bhaktas of Lord Shiva. Ganesha is such a big man, such a great person. This is why I am telling you that I stay with Ganesha, just as you may tell me that you stay with the Prime Minister or the President. It is high level talk: I am the guest of Ganesha. Am I not a great man?

Where is Kartikeya?

Kartikeya does not stay here. He is involved in the war on the Indo-Pak border. Kartikeya is the commander-in-chief of the army of the Devas. South Indians worship him. He sits on a beautiful peacock throne. When he likes you, he will come, but so far, he is not thinking of me. He is more worried about what is happening across the border. The first line of the *Kartikeya Ashtottar Shatnam* goes like this:

Kartikeya with a dart – Harohara

Sri Subrahmanyam – Harohara

Sri dweller of the jungle – Harohara.

How is it possible that Bholenath takes his food in the kutir of Ganeshaji, who is a vegetarian?

Bholenath is Bhairava, Shivaji's security officer. Now, what can the son do if an important officer of his father eats meat? The son has to accept this. There is something very special about Bholenath. He was not intended for this place. I have no love for dogs. Although I had eight to ten dogs on my family estate, I never dealt with them. Swami Niranjan wanted a

dog and he brought this dog from Kolkata. He used to live in Munger with Swami Niranjan. One day Swami Niranjan came here and brought the dog with him. When I saw the dog, I said, “What a dirty dog; he has scabies!” He was scratching all day. I asked Swami Niranjan, “What food do you give him?” He said, “Khichari, dahlia, whatever we eat.” I said, “Look here, he’s a canine animal. If you cannot give him meat, shoot him.” He said, “How can we give him meat in the ashram?” I said, “Keep him here. I’ll give him meat.”

Swami Niranjan asked me, “Where do we take the money from? Do we prepare a voucher for one kilo of meat for Bholenath? I cannot do that.” At that time, a Sindhi bhakta, Guruvani, from Mumbai was sitting here, and on hearing this he decided to open an account for Bholenath with seven hundred rupees. Last year, due to the Greeks and Italians, the account grew to fifty thousand rupees, just for his food. He is rich!

Bholenath eats food from only one shop in Deoghar. If you purchase meat elsewhere, he will leave it, because before eating he first smells it. A Muslim family prepares meat for him. They are his bhaktas. The wife comes here with a full pot of meat. She salutes him and says, “Jai Bholenath.” Now her family has become prosperous. Their shop has expanded and there is a rush of customers. Her son started a small tea stall. They told me, “Swamiji, we now have God’s grace in our house and it is all Bholenath’s kripa.”

I kept Bholenath and gave him fifty grams of meat every day. He became very healthy. In fifteen days, his scabies vanished, because he was getting the essential diet of a canine animal. We can eat meat, but it is not the natural food of man. Our thirty two teeth, the length of our intestines, and many other factors, tell us that, but a dog’s food is meat.

Why do you give Bholenath cognac?

I have initiated him into the Bhairava *sampradaya*. Therefore, he has to drink it. First, he will go and sniff it and say, “Woof, woof!” Next, he will turn around in one direction, then a second direction and a third, and finally he will sip it. After

that, he comes to me and licks my lips, and then goes to sleep. He snores and whines in his sleep, as if he is angry at some dog, and then he moves his legs as if he is running. He dreams! He makes physical movements when he is sleeping.

After an hour he gets up and goes to his ball, picks it up and stands before me as if to say, "Come on, let us play." Then I play with him just for five minutes. After which he goes to the toilet. Then we go for tulsi pooja, and arati. After that, we come here and I give him food. He smells it, takes one piece and leaves it. He will eat it at midnight. Before eating, he drinks water until he is full.

Swami Niranjan is his best friend. Swami Gyanprakash is his mother. Swami Satsangi is his caretaker, and I am his master. These four relationships he knows; he does not know anyone else. People have tried their best to make friends with him, but no one has succeeded.

Why do people commit mistakes?

If a boy goes to school and the teacher gives him ten problems to solve, certainly he will make one or two errors. He will not be one hundred percent correct, neither is total accuracy expected of him. Everybody commits mistakes. I also make mistakes, and even when God incarnates, He leaves behind some mistakes.

Would you please sing one kirtan for us?

No, I will not sing kirtan for you. I did sing before, but it was only for your entertainment, although I used to enjoy it myself. Now, I sit beside my ishta deva and sing for Him. It is not true that I do not sing at all. I keep a harmonium and a tampura, I have a tape recorder and tapes as well, but all of these are only for Him. All my efforts are intended for Him and not for you or the public. Now, whatever I do, I do only for Him, and in front of Him.

Previously, whatever I did was for your amusement. Do you understand? I was being a joker, and I used to crack a lot of jokes to amuse people. There are many other jokers too. *Atmajnana*, knowledge of the self, does not come from

this. This only amuses people. Well sung *Ramayana*, well sung kirtan, inspiring pravachana, all these are entertainment, and you people enjoy this entertainment. It has been stated by Adi Shankaracharya in *Viveka Chudamani*:

*Speaking high sounding words,
Delivering lectures extempore
And explaining scriptures in style,
These can please the scholars
But they are for worldly happiness
And not useful for liberation.*

Is sumerani for purashcharana?

No, sumerani is only a reminder. There are different rules for various types of purashcharana. The ordinary purashcharana is performed by repeating the mantra syllables hundreds and thousands of times. The number of syllables excludes the mantra Om. For example, in the mantra Om Nama Shivaya, apart from Om, there are five syllables. Purashcharana would be to repeat that mantra five hundred thousand times. This means to rotate the japa mala five thousand times. The japa mala contains one hundred and eight beads, but it is counted as only one hundred.

If you repeat fifty malas every hour for ten hours every day, it will take ten days. This is very difficult. To repeat the mantra fifty thousand times per day requires a great deal of practice. No more than forty malas can be repeated in an hour, so it takes fifteen to twenty days to complete one purashcharana of this panchakshara. During this period, there are also particular observances to be followed, regarding meals, how to sit, how to sleep, and so on. Purashcharana should be performed once in a year, and the practice can be successfully completed in ten days during the period of Navaratri. For this, one would have to repeat the mantra fifty thousand or fifty four thousand times, and sit for twelve to fifteen hours per day. If you can sit for such long hours, you can try it.

In 1992, I performed the ashtottarshatlaksh mantra purashcharana. I did not meet anybody that whole year. It

took me three hundred days, from morning until evening, to complete ten million, eight hundred thousand rounds of japa. It was a great success. After completing the purashcharana, my body and mind were both healthy, and I heard the inner command, "Love your neighbours as I have loved you. Provide for your neighbours as I have provided for you." This was a very beautiful commandment. Christianity also preaches, 'Love thy neighbour.'

It used to take three hours to reach Bhagalpur. Now, in three hours you can reach Japan, so Japan has become your neighbour, isn't that so? It takes ten hours to reach Mumbai by car. Now, in ten hours, you reach London. So, London has also become your neighbour. In this context, what is the meaning of neighbour? Neighbour means one whom you can approach easily and converse with. Now, if you want to talk to your neighbour from here, it will take fifteen minutes to reach your neighbour's house. In ten minutes, you can talk to London on the telephone. So the people of the world have all become neighbours! Now, what is the definition of neighbour? 'For the generous hearted, the whole world is one family.'

What are the rules concerning food and diet during purashcharana?

The first rule is to take light meals, but light meals are different in different states. In Orissa, a light meal is rice, but in Punjab a light meal is roti, not rice. Now, how many times should one eat? This will be taught by your teacher or guru. Such questions should be asked of him, and not of anyone else, because if this question is put before different people, they will each answer differently. These rules differ from person to person after considering his endurance. One general rule will not apply for everybody. For example, a person suffering from a peptic ulcer will have to eat four times daily and drink milk. If he eats only boiled food, his peptic ulcer will be aggravated all the more. Then there are people for whom fruit is unsuitable.

Therefore, follow the advice of your teacher or instructor. I have given you the general idea in order not to disappoint

you, but I do not teach these things now. You have asked me and I just gave you a reply, but you should not be influenced by what I have said. I am not a teacher, a guru or an acharya. You asked me the way to Deoghar and I showed you the road. Now, I have left the post of guru. I did the job of my guru for some years at his command. I just acted, but now I dislike playing that role. Who is man to become guru in this world?

There is only one guru in this world and He is the supreme father, God. You should try to know Him who resides asleep, deep within you. Instead you try to find Him hither and thither in the external world. Kabir has rightly said:

*Your Lord is within you,
Like fragrance in the flowers.
Why, like a musk deer
Are you searching for musk
In the grass again and again?*

The guru is within you. You are keeping all your gold, silver and diamonds within you, and yet you ask me, "Where is my kripa?" Similarly another poet has said:

*All is contained within the pitcher (body).
Why are you searching outside?
O my soul!
Where goest thou to search for Him?
The father of this world sleeps within you.
As the fragrance exists in the flowers,
As the image exists in the mirror;
So the Lord resides in you.
You have only to find Him
In your pitcher (body).*

I have divorced myself from gurudom, and all this role playing falls heavy on me. Even if you argue, I am not going to change my mind. You cannot convince me, because my guru has said, "A paramahansa has to live alone. He is neither guru nor disciple. He has neither mother nor father; relations nor friends. He never dies nor is he born. He is chidananda roopa, shivoham, shivoham. That is all; that is the only truth."

This is what Adi Shankaracharya has said in his stotram:

*I am neither mind, nor intellect, nor chitta,
Neither ears nor tongue, neither nose nor eyes ,
Neither sky nor earth, neither light nor air.
I am consciousness and bliss incarnate.
I am Shiva and Shiva alone.
I am neither happiness nor suffering,
Neither virtue nor vice,
Neither mantras nor sacred places,
Neither Vedas nor sacrifice,
Neither food nor enjoyment nor enjoyer.
I am the consciousness and bliss incarnate.
I am Shiva and Shiva alone.
I am neither death nor doubt,
Nor any kind of distinction.
I have neither father nor mother nor birth,
Neither relatives nor friends,
Neither guru nor disciples.
I am the consciousness and bliss incarnate.
I am Shiva and Shiva alone.*

Then how shall we go on?

Well, in the same way as a widow carries on after her husband's death, carry on without the guru.

For how long?

This has become a habit with you people. You keep a baby in your lap until his legs are strong. Then, you put him down when the time is right, and he stands up by himself. In this way, he begins to walk, and after some time, he is able to run. But if you carry your children on your shoulders and keep them in your laps forever, they will become weak. In the same way, one day you must learn to live in this world without any support. This is reality. One who has never depended on anyone, who has found his own path for himself, and has been able to solve his own problems in life, is a man I can understand. Such a man can even find God. One who is always

dependent on others for money, for love and for support, cannot achieve anything.

My Guruji is not living anymore, so what am I to do? I will have to find my own way. He has given me eyes to see and made my feet strong. He is with me as my support. He told me that I had reached the railway station forty five years early. At that time my guru said, "Look, you will have to wait for forty five years. Your train will not arrive before that. You still have to exhaust your karmas." I thought, "Well then, I am going home." However, he said, "No, what will you do there, farming? You can do that here. Banking? You do that here. Accounting? You do even that here. Looking after cows? You do it here, too."

So, in the ashram, I did what I would have done at home. My karmas were exhausted; that was one benefit. Had I gone back home, I would have worked for myself, but in the ashram I worked for my guru without attachment to the fruits of my labour. These karmas did not bind me. Whatever I did, I did for him. I was neither a doer nor an enjoyer. I became clean of all karmas.

Then I tried working at Munger. Before I had worked for my guru with a selfless attitude. I thought, "Now, let us see if, without my guru, the ego will appear or not." I had made up my mind to work with a selfless attitude, so I started an institution for yoga in Munger. Guruji had said, "Make yoga known throughout the world at a scientific level, not at the level of philosophy and religion." Taking this to be the commandment of my Guruji, I did this for twenty five to thirty years. Then he said, "Now, full stop!"

Well, the man who would leave Bihar School of Yoga is a great fool, is he not? It is a very powerful yoga center and people are well acquainted with it in every corner of the world. Many instructors and teachers have been trained by this institution, and people have supreme faith in the teachings and philosophies presented there. When Swami Niranjan recently went to Delhi, he met the Chairman of the University Grants Commission, who said, "You need not explain about your institution. I know all about it. It is

very reliable and I will give the status of a university to this institution.”

Tulsidas has said:

*O Rama, I desire nothing.
Without Thee, everything is tasteless:
Wealth, buildings and pleasures.
Keep the beautiful ladies, progeny,
Servants, all qualities, even intellect,
Valuable learning, reputation, arts,
Talent and doctrines of different kinds.
Give others Thy eight siddhis and nine nidhis.
I am Thy servant birth after birth.
Make me Thine own by holding my hand.*

What is the necessity of taking yoga to university level?

In the present climate, people will not accept what you say unless it can be proved by scientific data. For example, if you say that nauli and dhauti or this asana or pranayama will cure this disease, you must prove it by research. Then people will immediately accept it. However, if you claim that the cholesterol level will drop after performing a certain kriya, but you do not prove it, then it is only speculation and has no validity. It is useless to discuss the benefits of asana and pranayama unless you can prove them scientifically. The present age demands scientific proof for everything.

We said, “Practise dhyana and mantra japa; this will give you peace.” We proved that the different brainwaves: alpha, beta, theta and delta, are lowered and become steady by the practice of dhyana. Thus, the blood pressure slows down and the pressure on the heart decreases. This has been verified by scientific data. So far, no one else in the world has done this. Our sannyasins are all educated, and they can go to any part of the world. I do not protect them. They manage their food, money and everything else by themselves. They are well informed and aware of the state of affairs everywhere. Unless sannyasins are well educated, they cannot gain self confidence and lead yoga and dharma ahead.

How should one deal with an atheist?

In the present world, many people are atheists. Dr Upendra Baxi, the Vice Chancellor of the Delhi University, is an atheist. His father was a great disciple of mine, but he was also an atheist. Now, it rests upon me to change his mind. Who else can do it? I say to him, "You do not believe in God, because you cannot see Him. However, you believe in Swami Satyananda, simply because you can see him sitting before you."

Dr Upendra Baxi once said to me, "Swamiji, I do not believe in God or in religion." I replied, "You only believe in me because I am living." He said, "Yes," and offered me a peg of scotch! Dr Baxi studied for his BA, took a job and went to America and England. I arranged his marriage, and after performing the private ceremony, I also performed the official ceremony. Mrs Prema Baxi had met him at a seminar and both of them were in love. I said, "Do not carry on for too long or there will be problems. Both of you should get married." So they were married in Mumbai. How should one deal with these people? Today's world is very difficult.

What sort of research work have you done previously?

Bihar School of Yoga in Munger is a powerful organization. I used to travel from India to Frankfurt, and on leaving the airplane, I would hire a car. I travelled by car all over Switzerland and from France to England. I would drive at speeds of two hundred to two hundred and fifty kilometers per hour until eleven or twelve o'clock at night, and then check into a hotel. Then I would telephone a newspaper and insert two to four lines in the local newspaper, 'Swami Satyananda on Kundalini Yoga', 'Swami Satyananda on Tantra', 'Swami Satyananda on Asana, Pranayama', as well as the entry fee. The meetings were held in the evening, and three to four hundred people would come. From the entry fee I would pay for the hotel, restaurant, car hire, and keep some money in my pocket.

From England, I would go to Rotterdam and from there, catch a very fast ship and reach America in three to four days. By that time, I would have at least sixty thousand dollars in my

pocket. I would spend all that money in America. I would rent a laboratory for a week, and hire technicians to do research on whatever report I had brought from India. For example, the effect of bhastrika pranayama on the blood, on the brain, on the spinal cord, on the glands. Then, after spending the sixty thousand dollars on research, I would return to India. This research is with the library at the Bihar School of Yoga. Now I have left all these things. I did all this work on my guru's instructions, but I am no longer interested.

What is your interest these days?

I am only interested in one thing now; I want the darshan of God, in form, *sakara*, not formless, *nirakara*. Why? Because nirakara is very easy, but sakara is difficult. If God comes in the form of a child, of Vishnu, Brahma, innocent Shankara or pot-bellied Ganeshaji, welcome! To be able to perceive through the eyes that tattwa which is not visible to the eyes is sakshatkara. This life is dedicated only to that. Kabir has said:

Unmanifest is my father and manifest my mother.

Whom to praise and whom to blame?

Both sides of the scale are in balance.

You people are welcome when I call you, but I am not interested in any one of you. My wholehearted interest is in the rural people. If I can provide irrigation facilities and dispense primary healthcare to the local villagers, my work is over. I know that no politician, leader, minister or government can do anything for them. Whatever they talk about is limited to a period of four to five years, and at the end of the fourth year, it stops.

Is there any instrumental measurement of kundalini movement?

Yes, it has been measured. A good or evil thought, a divine or devilish thought, has an effect on the biological system of man; this is a scientific fact. Although anger is an emotion, when you are angry, there is a biological change in your body. When you have passion, although passion is also an emotion,

it produces a chemical change in your body. Similarly, when you are terrified or afraid, certain changes take place in the physical body. It is the same when the awakening of kundalini begins. Although it is a spiritual, psychic or astral event, the effect is felt on the biological system of the body, and changes do take place.

There are two magnetic circuits and they show a different behavior. This is true; I have seen it myself, but I can't say much about that now, because these are things which belong to my past, and I no longer want to have anything to do with that. I am not interested in kundalini yoga, kriya yoga or pranayama. I am only interested in one thing, the vision of God in sakara form. I am not interested in the experience of light or of awakening. I only want to see God, just as I see you.

Oh God, come to my place with two arms and two legs, and say, "I am God". I want to see you, whether in the form of a man, woman or child. If you are not able to come in any of these forms, then come in the form of a servant and clean my utensils. The *sakara roopa*, manifest form, of God is very difficult to obtain. You can awaken kundalini through sadhana, and there are people who do so through drugs. Awakening of kundalini is not such a big thing; there is nothing special in it. Do not go after it.

After all, what have people with awakened kundalini got? A few siddhis, a few visions. Practising sadhana for the attainment of siddhis is like prostitution, because siddhis are the downfall of a devotee. They represent a spiritual retrogression. Therefore, yogis, saints and mahatmas say, "No siddhis, no miracles." I also say the same, because my purpose in becoming a sannyasin was not to perform siddhis for you. I did not leave my hearth and home, my parents and my past, for siddhis. I left all that to become a sannyasin.

My guru said, "God can be seen." God is visible in the form of a child, a beggar, or even a thief, because God can take any form. I do not know if God is formless or with form, because the formless, *nirakara*, cannot be perceived, so there is no proof. However, God does come in a form, *sakara*. At different times he came in the form of Rama, Krishna,

Shankara and Hanuman. In Vivekananda's spirit, there was a part of Shiva. Similarly, in Dattatreya there was a part of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh. In this way, many great souls come into the world with a part of God in them. But my God is everywhere. "This is my brinjal, this my potato; this is my Rama, this my Gopala." I want to see God in many forms, to see Shyam wherever I look.

*Vishnu in water, Vishnu in land,
Vishnu on the mountain top also.
Vishnu in light, Vishnu on the forehead,
Vishnu in the family, Vishnu in the whole world.*

Would you tell us about the rural housing project here?

I want to make a system of accommodation for the rural people. It is not possible to accommodate a whole family in one room. There should at least be some place where cows and goats can be kept, and some fuel stored. Now, we shall see whether the system of mud construction, as we used in Ragunath kutir, will work in the village. It is very economical and we can easily make such a house for everyone.

A lady who knows how to prepare mud bricks is coming here, and she will help us. So far, the bricks have been prepared by the villagers with the use of two machines; one is from Delhi and the other from Colombia. Ragunath Kutir has been built from raw, unfired mud blocks, made by a mud block compressor. This is the adobe method. Tripura Kutir was made by ramming mud into a wooden frame, which is the pise method. Actually, the technology of mud houses is lost in India. The villagers still have them, but the quality of construction is not good. In France, I saw top quality mud houses. I saw a three storied mud house which was so enduring that it would have needed a bomb blast to break it!

These methods are not known here, but mud houses are constructed in many foreign countries. Therefore, they are able to provide inexpensive housing for the people. If a house costs too much to build, which government is going to provide it? But at a cheaper rate, it would be possible. Mud houses are

very beautiful. You can install all the comforts of electricity, heating, computer and television in them. Mud is also good because the temperature remains under control. In summer it is cool, and in winter it is warm. But it seems to me that this technique will take a long time to come to India on a broad scale.

In the meantime, out of forty thousand families, only one gets to have a proper house where they can also keep a cow. There should be space provided for a kitchen and a place where wood, goytha and hay can be kept. Separate rooms can be made for the parents, the daughters-in-law who have children, and the pregnant women. Children can play on the balcony. We are preparing many designs, and this one is the latest.

Can cows be donated to the rural people?

Today we are presenting the first cow, which has been donated by Swami Janakananda from Denmark. Denmark is a country where a lot of milk is available and they love cows. They do not consider them as their mothers as we do in India, but they do look after them. There milk and butter flow like rivers, and the people eat a lot of cheese and drink a lot of milk. So, this morning, Swami Janakananda went to purchase a cow. He did this through a veterinarian who knows all the cows, so that we do not get duped.

The cow he bought produces four litres of milk. When the chosen family receives the cow, the children will get milk, which is a complete food. If you have milk, you do not need roti, rice and sabji. There is only one tattwa which cow's milk does not contain, which goat's milk does. When you mix cow's milk and goat's milk together, then you do not need meat, eggs, roti or dal. If a family has a cow which gives four litres of milk, they are self sufficient. Milk is a sattwic food which is good for everybody: children, mothers, pregnant women, sick or healthy people, weight lifters or athletes. So, I thank Swami Janakananda for this brilliant idea.

Satsang 8

November 20, 1994, Afternoon

When I am reborn, it will be as a sannyasin right from my birth. This is my wish. Then when I am asked, “Swamiji, what is your age and how long have you been a sannyasin?” I will answer, “I am thirty five and I have been a sannyasin for thirty five years.” Yes, a mother should bear such children and say to them from birth, “You are the apple of my eye. You are my darling. I love you very much. Follow the path of God for you are pure and free from sin.”

Such a child, born once in a hundred years, is free from the taints of the world. He can be the savior, redeemer, teacher, prophet, God-incarnate, junior god or avatara! In fact, you too should pray that you shall be born as a sannyasin and your mother should proclaim, “You are pure; you are enlightened; you are without sin, and you are a sannyasin.” The time of birth is for both the body and the soul. After all, it is useless for a man to seek immortality for the body. Perhaps the Egyptians did this, but I will not.

Please tell us about your sadhana and life after leaving the mission.

After travelling to all the siddhateerthas, I finally went to Trayambakeshwar, near Nasik, to the jyotirlingam of my ishta deva, Mahamrityunjaya. I stayed there for two months and had a breakthrough. This place was shown to me, and I came to Rikhia. For five years, I have practised *panchagni*, the sadhana of five external fires, and now the awareness has

become constant. It is a very difficult state of mind, because I do not like to meet people; I do not like to talk or think. I am not sick; I just do not like to think or talk. Kabir explains this state very beautifully:

*When the mind is intoxicated,
Why should it speak?
Finding the diamond, I tied it inside a knot.
Why untie it again and again?
When there was light, it was measured and complete.
Why this measuring again and again?
From remembrance the wine seller became intoxicated,
Drank that wine without measure
And found the Swan of Hamsa in lake Mansarovar.
Why wander around puddles and ponds now?
My Lord is within my being.
Why look outside?
Kabir says: I found the Lord hiding behind a sesame seed.*

My wish is that every breath should be permeated by my mantra. I do japa all the time. We breathe 21,600 times in 24 hours. That means 15 breaths every minute, 900 breaths every hour, so in 24 hours, it is 21,600 rounds of breath. All animals: dogs, donkeys, cows, buffalos, breathe, and we too breathe. What is the sound of this breath? What does the breath sing? Breath has a mantra, a sound, of its own. What is that sound? When you breathe in and out, there is a sound, *nada* or *shabda*. One needs to hear that sound within, and that is called *anahada nada*. It is a sound which is not produced by the senses. That sound is an expression of your inner experience. Some say it is *Hamsa*, some say *Soham*, some say *Om*, but one has to experience it for oneself.

When you receive a mantra from your guru, whether it be *Om*, *Om Nama Shivaya* or whatever, that mantra is pronounced by one sense, the sense of speech. It is heard by another sense, that of hearing. The same mantra which you have received from your guru should also be heard within as an experience. That is possible, if you can merge your mind in the breath. When you try to merge your mind with the breath, does the

mind cooperate? No, it does not. This rascal has bad habits. We have pampered and spoilt the mind. It is addicted to ambitions, fantasies and dreams.

It is very pleasant to dream, fantasize and imagine. You feel that you can reach the moon and the stars; you are the master of the universe! What nonsense! You cannot be the master of the universe, if your mind does not want you to! If you are constipated, nothing can happen without a laxative. You cannot direct your own bowels, yet you are trying to be the Lord of the universe! So, you should attune your mind with the breath, and synchronize the breath with the mantra. Practise this with calmness and quietness of mind, 21,600 times for one day.

A lot of energy is required for this sadhana, because after all, you need to go to the toilet. You need to have a little rest and to eat food, if not twice, at least once in a day. So, although 21,600 is an impossible number of mantras to complete, it should be done at least for one day, one twenty four hour period in your lifetime. This is only possible when you can sit with your back straight and your mind constant for many hours at a stretch. Otherwise, you will be yawning, feeling lazy, sleepy or tired. I have come here for this purpose, because I do not think that life has any other meaning:

*Your servant will repeat the mala
Of incoming and outgoing breath.
To avoid roaming about in the eighty four lakh wombs
And empower himself to cut the snare of karmas.
O Lord, do not think that love is shrieking in my heart.
While dying, let me remember You;
While living, allow me to remember you.*

You may enjoy life; you may acquire, accomplish and accumulate a lot in life. You may see places, have a lot of experiences, but the ultimate destiny of man is to realize that which is beyond name, form and senses. That which you cannot perceive with your eyes or conceive with your mind is beyond name and form. You can only see it when

the external lights are extinguished, then the inner light burns. In that inner light alone, you can perceive that which is beyond. It can be called any name you wish, but it is something else:

What is the measure of the brilliance of Parambrahma?

It is unspoken,

The proof is in realization.

Would you tell us about the early days of your mission?

I lived a long time in Munger, just to obey my guru's command. I did not have any interest in yoga, ashrams or disciples, then or now. I had to perform a drama in Munger, because my guru said to me, "Satyananda, your ideas are brilliant!" I was a Sanskrit scholar, and Swami Sivanandaji used to consult me in delicate Sanskrit matters. He knew Sanskrit, but he was not a scholar himself. He used to talk about yoga.

Swami Sivananda was a medical doctor. He used to say that unless evidence is given in black and white that yoga can cure or alleviate certain diseases, nobody would accept it. Ordinary people might accept it, but the scientists and intellectuals would not. He understood this, because he was a doctor himself. At that time, I worked for the Divine Life Society in Rishikesh, as I worked later for Bihar School of Yoga. In fact, I worked much more in Rishikesh! I worked so hard that I became lean and thin; you could keep an apple here on my collar bones and count my ribs! I worked day and night. I used to guard the ashram all night. Of course, I was not the actual guard, but if I blew the whistle at twelve or one o'clock in the morning, the guard had to respond.

One day, Swami Sivananda told me, "Satyananda, you have worked hard all these years for the Divine Life Society, now you are free to go. You do not need to stay here any more." It was he who asked me to go away. He said, "This is not the place for you." I said, "Alright, I am ready to go." On the same day that I had entered the ashram twelve years before, I went to him with my bag and baggage. He gave me one hundred

and eight rupees and said, “You have to do nothing but add zeros to the right side!” Then he taught me kriya yoga in five minutes. I said, “Swamiji, I already know it; I only needed this reminder.”

When I left the ashram, I found it very difficult. There were so many gurus, swamis and teachers, who were all career, name and fame oriented:

A guru is he who has mastered the true knowledge.

A disciple is he who can learn what is taught.

Without being able to maintain

The decorum of his status,

A man can neither become a guru nor a disciple.

There were so many books on religion. I travelled from 1956 to 1963. Then I went to Trayambakeshwar, which is near Nasik in Maharashtra. This is the place where the Godavari river emerges. Of course, Lord Shiva has infinite forms, but the *Mrityunjaya* Shiva, the Conqueror of Death, is there, and He is my ishta devata. *Mrityu* means ‘death’, and *jaya* means ‘conquest’. He has three faces: *Brahma*, *Vishnu*, and *Mahesh*; the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer, all in one lingam:

I repeat the name

Of the three eyed Lord Mrityunjaya,

Seated with Parvati.

He who holds two pots in his lotus hands

From which he pours water on his own head.

Who also holds two water pots in his lap,

Who holds the mala of rudraksha and the deer,

And from whose head

The crescent moon drips nectar.

That is my deity. I went there, bowed down, and said, “I cannot do any more without Your help. I cannot fulfill the mission which my guru gave me; it is not possible.” There were so many teachers! I do not even remember all their names; they are gone in the hazy pages of history. Then suddenly the idea of surrender came to me. I said, “Lord, I

will work with whatever inspiration or help You may give me for twenty years. After that, I will leave everything and come to You. Just twenty years.” It was on that day in December 1963 that I made this one promise and prayer to Him.

Did you ever have any tantric experiences?

Early in my life, I had an interaction with a tantric lady. Well, the word ‘lady’ is just a nomenclature. She was horrible; as fat as a buffalo, as black as coal, as obscene as a harlot. In no way was she feminine! Nevertheless, she impressed me very much. Perhaps she was hypnotic, because she mesmerized me. Of course, beautiful women can hypnotize, but how could an ugly woman hypnotize me? I was under her tutelage off and on, for a period of six months. She taught me the practical side of tantra, including vama marga.

During this period, I had terrific, mind-blowing experiences: loss of external consciousness and beautiful, internal visions. I did not know whether she was a lady, whether she was by my side or I was alone in a cave. There was nothing but continuous waves of profound experience! I used to go to her whenever I had a holiday. I kept her on my property. I had a very large property, about four thousand acres. I was a farmer with substantial land.

One day she said she was leaving. I asked her to initiate me. She said, “I do not initiate. Whatever experience I have given you is only a glimpse. You cannot have it anymore, unless you work for it. It is I who infused it in you. You know that this is the experience. Now, you have to work for it yourself.” I said, “Then give me initiation!” She said, “No, I do not initiate. Find a guru for yourself and prepare the ground.” That was how she said it. I thought she was rubbish, but she told me that I was rubbish. She said, “You have a lot of rubbish in you and only the guru can clear it out.” Then she gave me one sign, one mantra. She taught me a little ritual for invoking a spirit. Of course, I am not going to teach anyone that. If you invoke a spirit and it overpowers you, then your name may be Satyananda, but somebody else will be operating within you.

In Trayambakeshwar, I used this to invoke the spirit of a very great master; and it worked; he came. For twenty years, he worked through my body, through my speech, through my brain, through my fingers, through everything of Swami Satyananda. I became his medium, and wherever I went, whether in India, Australia or Europe, there were no obstacles. My life was perfect, smooth sailing. The people who came to Munger were very sincere, innocent and childlike. Many people lived with me from all over the world.

When the twenty years had passed, I happened to be near Trayambakeshwar and thought, “Why don’t I go there?” So, I went, and the moment I prostrated, I remembered the prayer, the promise and the invocation. At that moment, the great soul I had invoked left me. Swami Satsangi was with me and I said to her, “Get the plane tickets. I am going to Munger to hand over my charge to Swami Niranjan. I want to leave everything. Now I remember my promise.” I reached Munger and handed over everything. I informed the committee members and left the place, never to return, even though the Munger ashram had many facilities and it would have been tempting for anyone to stay on there, including me. I made a request to my ishta devata, and he fulfilled it. At the same time, I also made a promise, and I have to fulfill it. A great spirit was working through me for twenty years, but that spirit is not with me any more.

What is the most important thing in life?

The ultimate point in life is god consciousness. Vibhishan says to his brother Ravana:

*All qualities and happiness devoid of bhakti
Are like various kinds of unsalted food.
In the same way, O enemy of the gods,
A most beautiful woman adorned in jewels
Does not please the eye if she is unclothed.*

You may have everything: intellect, money, power, beauty, but without devotion, your life is barren; you have no stuff. Devotion to God is the ultimate sadhana. Yoga is not the

ultimate sadhana; yoga prepares the road. Just as the road roller from the Public Works Department prepares smooth roads for cars to drive on, yoga prepares inroads for the mind. Devotion is not going to a temple or a church to pray. Devotion is love and romance with God. Your mind is dancing with God. He is my lover, my beloved. I am prakriti, jivatma, female, He is male; He is my husband; He is everything to me. That attitude must come. When all the passions are transformed, then you will have no passion for anything except Him.

It is said in the *Narada Bhakti Sutras* that according to sage Narada, devotion is characterized by complete dedication of all activities and observances to God and by the experience of extreme agony while forgetting Him. There are many instances of such devotion. The Gopis of Vrindavan can be cited as examples. In the last pronouncement of the *Ramayana* it is said that: "God should be dear to me in the same manner as a woman is dear to a man. As money is dear to a miser, so shall God be dear to me." The last goal of life is the attainment of total surrender to the Lord, and refuge in Him, nothing else. If you do not achieve this, then you have to come back with a return ticket in your next birth!

How can we get rid of the rubbish which fills our lives?

A thorn has to be removed by a thorn. If a thorn is lodged in your body, use another thorn to remove it. In the same way, remove rubbish by rubbish. You may ask your guru or somebody else to remove your rubbish for you but, in this way, you are only adding more to your waste bin. That is why your rubbish basket is always full. The municipality removes the old rubbish, but the new garbage accumulates again. When God's grace is there, then all the rubbish of life is removed instantly, just as sheets and sheets of darkness are removed by the first rays of the sun.

*O Lord, without the water of love and bhakti,
The inner filth can never be cleansed.
Without satsang,
No talk of God is possible.*

*Without spiritual discourse,
Delusion is not removed.
Unless there is an end to delusion, intense love
At the feet of Rama is never possible.*

Samskaras from many different births will vanish or subside only with the Lord's grace. However long you work at removing your rubbish, you will not be able to do it. Nothing is possible without divine grace. If you think you can remove your rubbish, that is ego. You are speaking the language of ego. How can you remove it? First of all, you do not know what is rubbish and what is not. Sometimes you may be throwing away the diamonds and keeping the stones, because you do not know the difference between them. What is rubbish? What are you going to remove? You do not even have the discrimination to know what is true and what is false.

Therefore, leave it to God. Try to attain His grace through prayer, remembrance and satsang. The first sadhana is satsang, where there is talk about God, about spiritual life or where there is singing of bhajan and kirtan. This helps you to purify yourself and your inner environment. Satsang must be compatible with your inner environment. Everything is written in the *shastras*, or scriptures. Nothing happens without God's grace; nothing has happened to me. Whatever I have received was through God's grace, not my own. God's grace is required. It has been said in the *Narada Bhakti Sutras*:

*Success in devotion is attained
Mainly by the grace of great souls,
As well as by a trace of Divine Grace.
Association with great souls is difficult to obtain,
But at the same time it is unfailing.
This, too, becomes available by God's grace only.*

I do not attribute my success to myself. Whatever success I have had, whatever I have achieved in spiritual life, was not due to my personal effort or diligence. It was because of God's grace.

*What is to be gained by more or less anxiety?
Who am I that something will be done by me?
What has been done has been done by Thy kindness.
What is to be done will be done by Thy grace.*

I am not referring to external things, such as ashrams or money, but that which is eternal has been given by the Lord only. It is very difficult to tread the spiritual path, because it is the inner path. When your mind soars high in inner life, the path is uncharted; you do not know which way to go.

Therefore, it is ultimately *prabhu kripa*, the grace of God. If I would not have had God's grace, then my life would not have been like this. You need His grace, and in order to receive His grace, you have to be innocent, like a child. You do not have to be an intellectual giant. You have to be like a small child who plays with dolls, marries this doll with that doll, thinking that is reality. Children do that, and they believe it is true. If one doll is broken, the child cries, but you do not cry. So, you should develop childlike innocence. When you have childlike innocence, then things start to happen.

This month on Kartik Shukla Ekadashi, I performed the marriage of Tulsi and Shaligram. *Tulsi* is the plant which is called basil in English. *Shaligram* is the inner core of an aquarian animal which is worshipped by the Vaishnavas. I adorned them with a red brocade veil and ornaments, then I offered everything to them and sang. God has sent all this to me, and it felt nice to do it. Three days before I negotiated the marriage ceremony, suddenly somebody came and gave me a silver ornament. Then another lady gave me an ornament of gold studded with diamonds. I said, "Okay fine." Tulsi is there. You can see that she is married. Now, she wears that red cloth. She is having her honeymoon with her husband.

If you think about this intellectually, you will not understand it. I cannot explain these things, but I enjoy them. Why not? When children play with dolls and one doll is broken, why do they cry? When the doll breaks, they do not say that this doll is nothing; I can get another doll. They have their

feelings. Similarly, it is the feelings, the bhavana, which you have to develop in the path of bhakti, not the intellect.

*When I worship Lord Krishna,
This body marvels with hair standing on end,
The mind is exalted in bhakti,
The glow of the face is enhanced by tears of love,
And obscure words decorate my speech.*

What is bhavana?

Bhavana is feeling. The feelings of fear, passion, hatred, jealousy, anger, worry, love and devotion all come under the category of bhavana. For example, when you feel love for a man, you say, "Oh my darling, you are the most beautiful person. You are the apple of my eye. There is no one better than you." What nonsense you are talking! There are thousands of men, but for you he is the only one. This is because feeling makes you like a child, and feeling is always pure. Therefore, it is the feeling which you have to develop, not the intellect or reason. Aurobindo has said that reason is the barrier to spiritual life. At some point you must transcend reason. There is a time when intellect is necessary, but a time also comes when your life must be steered by positive feelings.

What are those feelings? They are not the feelings of jealousy and fear, but the feelings of devotion and love. When these feelings come into play, then God takes a form, He is seen, He begins to speak.

*O Lord, Thou shalt reside in the hearts
Of those who are bereft of sensuality,
Anger, pride, intoxication, delusion, greed,
Perplexity, attachment, hostility, deceit,
Arrogance and illusion.*

You may say that this is all psychosis or neurosis. Well, it is better to suffer from God psychosis and neurosis, than from this worldly psychosis and neurosis. I prefer to be called a spiritual psychotic. The intellectuals of Bengal used to call Ramakrishna Paramahansa a psychotic. The western

psychologists call this Christ neurosis. It is better to have Christ neurosis than to have this other worldly neurosis.

*The treasure of our happiness
Lies in these worn out brains.
Let me remain mad because
We mad people are far better off.*

Childlike devotion is necessary for bhakti. You should read books that strengthen your love for God. It is possible for the greatest intellectual giant to become like a child. I can give you an example. At first, Vivekananda did not understand the significance of whatever Ramakrishna was saying to him, because he was an intellectual. Finally, however, Vivekananda surrendered to Ramakrishna, and only then did he become the medium.

Can you tell us about some of your experiences with tantra?

I have a life story. Although I have always kept a very low profile, I have seen life in all of its phases. Very few sannyasins in India can claim that they practise tantra. This I can claim without any fear of anyone. I used to go abroad with my female secretary and keep her with me in my room. No sannyasin can dare to do that in India! Ladies have to stay in another room. I said, “No, Swami Satsangi will remain in the same hotel, in the same room. All the swamis know it very well.

I come from a place in Uttar Pradesh called Nainital. There is a beautiful lake near my home town, Almora. My father was posted there with the police. He had been retrenched from the first World War, during which he had been sent to Abyssinia, Mesopotamia and Algeria, as a regular foot soldier. When the war was over, he came back and got a job in the police force, which he liked. His job was in the town, so he completely neglected the family property which consisted of fifteen hundred acres of agricultural land and one thousand acres or more of forest. There were many animals on the property: five hundred sheep, six dogs, several ponies and donkeys, but my father was not interested in looking after them.

He had a job in town and he gave me eighteen rupees a month, which is not even a dollar! At the age of eight, I started working for that amount. I went to a boarding school in Nainital where I stayed from Monday to Friday. I had become a monitor of the class, so that I could keep my text books in the almirah there over the weekend. Every Saturday I would go straight from school to my village. I had to walk very far, up and down in the Himalayas, to reach my home.

Once on my return to Nainital, I walked past a fat lady. I did not look at her, but she called to me, "Hey! Come here!" I looked at her to see who she was calling, and she was calling me. I was not used to being ordered. In my life, nobody ever ordered me, neither my parents nor my guru, because I gave the orders. I cannot remember anybody in my life ever having told me, "Satyananda, do this!" No! This has been one of my proudest distinctions. Nobody has ever said to me, "Do this!" On the other hand, I have told others to do this and not to do that.

When this lady said to me, "Hey, come here!" I thought, "What nonsense is this?" I was offended, but I came to her quietly like a sheep or a dog. She gave me a pitcher and said, "Bring me milk. We want to drink tea." So, I went to Nainital market which was close by and brought milk. She said, "Sit down there," and I sat down. She offered me her chillum. I said, "No, I do not take it." "What?" she said. "I am giving it to you, take it!" I took it, and it was not a nice experience. I mean, how do you smoke chillum when you have never taken it before? Tea, coffee, chocolate or cheese is alright. Chillum is smoke, but I took it from her nevertheless.

There were a few ordinary, uneducated people around her. She was talking about ajna chakra, kundalini, nadis and so many things, which I had read about in the books of Swami Vivekananda and in the traditional yoga books. I thought, "My God, this lady knows so much!" So, every day I started going to her in the evening. She used to talk about *bhumika*, the seven states of existence. One day I asked her, "Where did you get this knowledge from? Which books have you read?" "Books," she said, "I do not even know how to hold them, this

way up or that way!" She was totally illiterate and very obscene. At the end of every sentence she used to add a very vulgar expression, and sometimes in between too. She could not complete a sentence without one or two vulgar expressions.

I said to my father, "I want to invite her." He said, "Okay, do as you like." So, I invited her and she came to my village. There was a cave on my property by the side of a river inlet. She consented to stay there, saying, "Nobody should come this side." In the evening, she started carousing and the whole night she would drink, smoke and eat mutton. In the day time, she used to sleep outside with all her clothes off, like a big buffalo! I thought that anybody who saw her would get a shock, but she said nobody would. So I made her comfortable, then I returned to school.

On the weekend, I went to her and said, "Will you teach me? Can I come?" "Yes, of course," she said, "come at twelve o'clock midnight, but do not carry a rifle." In my part of the country, which was in the region of Kumaon, Almora, Nainital and Corbett Park, you could not go out at night without a rifle, as it was infested with tigers and leopards. There is a book about this area called *Man Eaters of Kumaon*. However, she had said not to bring a rifle, so I had to negotiate about a mile and a half alone and unarmed, in the dead of night.

She was a capable teacher. Her name was Sukhman Giri, and the other property is called Sukhman Marhi after her. She was a sannyasin of Juna Akhara. She wore geru and smeared bhasma all over her body. I do not think she ever cleaned her teeth or took a bath, but she lived a very long life. Very recently, one of the swamis went to search for her, and he found that she had died only a few years ago. She was about eighteen years senior to me, so she was about thirty six when I was eighteen. *Sukhman* is the real pronunciation of sushumna. In the local dialect, sushumna nadi is known as sukhman.

Did you ever encounter a tiger?

Once I had gone to the Satpura Ranges in Central India to see how certain trees and flowers open for a short time in the middle of the night with a glowing light, like a glowworm.

There I encountered a tiger at very close range. At Kumaon too, when I was fifteen or sixteen, I met a tiger at such a close distance that I could not even think what to do. So, I just aimed my rifle and shot one, two, three, four, five, six bullets at the tiger, until the cartridge was empty. I did not even think, I just emptied the rifle at him. After which I lost consciousness for a few seconds and my whole body was perspiring. In my part of the country, perspiration is not well known, because it is very cold.

What do you think about Indian films?

There are many aspects in man's life. In films you are told everything about happiness and sorrow, but this is not everything. There is more to life than comedy and tragedy, love and hate. There has to be a story based on truth. Whenever they show pictures in India, they depict either tragedy or comedy, love and romance or hatred and violence. But there is something more in life. There is love in life; who says there is not? But this is not the most important aspect of life. In Hindi films, however, that is the core of the film.

How did you happen to settle in Munger?

Bhagalpur is a place about three hours from here on the bank of the Ganga. When I left Rishikesh, I came to Bhagalpur and stayed at Shiv-Bhavan with a very resourceful, influential, and well-established family. It was a very big family with three brothers and ten sisters. One full batch used to be there and they liked me very much. From morning until night, I would sing kirtan, kirtan and kirtan and talk and talk.

They said, "Swamiji, please stay here." They had property, money and influence. However, I decided not to stay there, because as sannyasins, we do not belong anywhere or to anyone. Not only sannyasins, nobody belongs to anyone! You just suppose that you are mine, that you are related to me. We are all individuals, pilgrims, individual travellers. We may meet and develop friendship, that is all.

So I left Bhagalpur for Munger. I thought that perhaps Munger was a better place. One of the chief disciples of

Buddha, Mudgal, came from Munger. That is why it was called Mudgal which later was anglicized into Munger. The people of Munger are not simple; they present you with a challenge. It is a difficult place to live. In the night, they would climb the terrace and remove all the light bulbs and taps. The next morning we would have neither light bulbs nor taps, and all the water tanks would be empty. That is the type of people they are.

Munger is a very difficult place for anyone to survive, whether a government officer, a sannyasin or even a political leader, because the people there have a lot of money and are very prosperous. Most of them are the descendants of Lord Krishna. Lord Krishna himself was always stealing, telling lies, making mischief. All his people are like him. Nevertheless, I dealt with all of them, and they were my best friends and helpers. So, I established the ashram in Munger.

In 1993, during the last convention, they told the District Magistrate of Munger, “You do not need to provide policemen for security. We will give security to the ashram, because after all, we are the danger.” If criminals give you security, then what more security do you need? They were the people who looked after the entire security during the convention, particularly of the foreigners.

What is the significance of shaligram?

Shaligram is important to the worshippers of Vishnu just as the shivalingam is to the worshippers of Shiva. It looks like an ordinary stone and is found in Nepal in two places. One is the Gandaki river and the other is a lake called Muktinath, which is located at a very high altitude. The shaligram is an aquarian animal which lives in the water. If you take some tulsi leaves with a very strong smell, rub them and put them in the water, the animal comes up. Then you catch it and remove the outer skin, that is all. It is exactly like any stone, but it has four distinctive features: lotus, flag, vajra and shankh.

In India, we believe that when God incarnates in human form, these four signs will be found on the soles of His feet.

The presence of these signs indicates that He is a divine incarnation.

*The Lord of Lakshmi should be meditated upon
Who is like the rising sun, clothed in yellow raiment,
Holding the conch, wheel and mace in his hands.*

There are many other indications also, like the sign of a conch in the finger prints, but it is the signs on the soles of the feet that are really important. Vaishnavas are very orthodox people. They do not eat garlic and onions, let alone meat and fish. They are pure vegetarians, but they worship the inner core of this animal, because it has the marks of God.

Similarly, the worshippers of Shiva have the *shivalingam*, the oval shaped stone, that is found in two places in India. One place is the Narmada river, in Central India, and the other is the Gomati river in North India. The lingams found in the Gomati are of inferior quality to those found in the Narmada. All the lingams which you find in Shiva temples are from the Narmada, except for twelve, which were derived from no specific place.

There is a tradition that when you find a shivalingam anywhere in the earth, then you dig deep around it. If you do not find the other end after fifteen feet, they say that it has no end. Then that is called *gyotirlingam*, because it was born there on its own. Then a temple is built around it. There are twelve such temples in India, which house the twelve *gyotirlingams*.

So, the Vaishnavas, have the *shaligram*. It must have the four signs, and it also has a golden ring on the top. Previously, people used to bring them from Nepal, but now the Nepalese customs remove the gold ring and then give you the *shaligram*.

Satsang 9

November 21, 1994, Morning

How is it that you are able to communicate so well with the village people?

All around me there are villagers. They like me very much, because they find that I am even poorer than them. This is a great solace to them, because they at least have one *dhoti*, but I do not even have that. I can live with them in much the same way as they live themselves. However, if I were to live with them like a rich man, then they would be jealous of me.

How can we live and work in the world without being disappointed when things do not go as we had planned?

Each person should regard his job as his duty. I have always done my work in the world as a duty, because this was my guru's order. I worked in his ashram for twelve years, but I never considered that it was my ashram; it was my guru's ashram. I never felt that my guru was utilizing me or that I was being harassed by him, day and night. I suffered from typhoid, jaundice and many types of diseases, but I never despaired, because devotion to guru or God is like that of a wife towards her husband.

The relationship between guru and disciple, is one of order, love and protection, just like the relationship between father and son. Selflessness is very important in this relationship.

*There is no one to be called one's 'own' like guru,
There is no giver like a learned man,
There is no wellwisher other than the Lord,
There is no caste like that of devotees.*

I never asked my guru about my *sadhana* during the twelve years that I stayed with him in Rishikesh. Rather, it was he who would call me and ask something from time to time. Swamiji was good at Sanskrit because he belonged to a brahmin family, but he was not a Sanskrit scholar. He was a doctor, and he used to ask me the meaning of Sanskrit words mentioned in the *ayurvedic* texts.

In Rishikesh, I built a large ashram, which was like a small Deoghar. At that time, the price of cement was three rupees per bag, and the labor charge was only four *annas* per day. This was in the forties. I started a printing press there, which was large and modern. Political leaders, military commanders and all types of people used to come and live in the ashram. However, there was never any expectation on my part.

I found this experience very useful in Munger, and I am applying it here as well. If I had expected anything in life, then I would have surely been disappointed. If you expect something, and your expectation is not fulfilled, then you will be disappointed. When you are disappointed, you feel miserable, and you are unable to achieve anything. In short, this expectation is your downfall. All of your expectations can never be fulfilled. You can only fulfill some of them, and these bring you happiness. However, those that remain unfulfilled shatter all your hopes. This leads to disappointment and depression, which ultimately causes a nervous breakdown.

One should not live life with expectation, thinking that this and that will happen. This is what Lord Krishna said clearly in the *Bhagavad Gita*: “Karma or duty is your right. Do not expect any fruits or results therefrom. It is your duty to act, but you have no right to the result.” (2:47–48) What Sri Krishna said was correct, and he persuaded Arjuna to fight. He did not tell him to escape from the battle of Kurukshetra. He simply told him, “Do your duty, but do not expect any result.” When

you perform your duties, you will certainly get the results. If you prepare the soil and sow the seeds, you will certainly get some fruits. If you open a shop, you will definitely get some income.

Why do you say that Bholenath is your disciple?

Bholenath is very lucky; so many things come for him. People have brought so much. They even bring Firebrand whiskey for him. I know the former lives of Bholenath. He was my disciple in his previous birth. Some twenty five to thirty years ago, he died in an accident. He was reborn as a dog and then again reborn as a dog. He has all the qualities of a disciple. A disciple has only one master. He does not flirt here and there; he has one-pointed direction. I will not disclose all his previous lives, because it is not good for him. To know about one's previous lives is not the law of nature. A few people, however, come to know it.

When Nachiketa was questioning Lord Yama about life after death, he replied, "Do not ask that question. Life hereafter is a mystery. Nobody has to know about it. Even the god's in ancient times doubted this point. It is very subtle and difficult to understand. Do not press me for that boon but choose some other, O Nachiketa. Abandon that boon and release me from obligation." (*Kathopanishad* 1:2:21). What was in this life? What was in that life? No one knows. We do not have one life only; we have had many lives. You also were someone else in the previous life, and you are someone different again in this life. However, there is a certain link between our past lives and what we are now.

Bholenath was my disciple in his previous life. His relationship with me was very deep, not superficial. Now he has been born again. He was searching for me, I was not searching for him. Why should I search? If something is lost, it is lost. Why worry or bother about it? But, he was searching for me, and he was able to find me, because he possesses all the qualities of a disciple. He has only one master, not two, and he obeys only one master. He keeps awake throughout the night and does not allow anyone to come to me.

When I start my anushtana, I lose all sense of time. The sadhana continues for one hour, two hours, three hours, and I enjoy it. Then Bholenath comes and wakens me, because after three hours, there must be a break in the asana, otherwise the body will become inert. Then I play with him with a ball for five minutes. At night he comes to me at least four or five times and sniffs at my head to ascertain whether I am alive or not. He does not move from here until I am in deep sleep. When my breath becomes lighter and lighter, then he comes out and lies down just outside my room.

He keeps watch there throughout the night. He intimidates all the sannyasins residing here. Initially, they thought that he was only a child of one month, but he has bitten each and every sannyasin here at one time or the other. I discovered about his previous life only last year, and he was as much devoted to me then as he is now. In his previous life, I was with him. He was married and he also had a child, but his behavior with me was the same as it is now.

If someone said something to me, he used to say, "Go away from here! You always trouble Swamiji with this or that. Don't you know how to say anything else? You always repeat these absurd things." He used to talk like this, and this very nature is still persisting. If you laugh, he will immediately start barking. He says, "Shut up!" Bholenath is famous throughout the world. He is known in England, America, Germany, France, Australia, Italy, Colombia, Japan, China and many other countries. His glory is great.

Nowadays, whenever worship of Goddess Durga or Kali is celebrated, the people of this locality bring prasada for Bholenath. When the children come and call his name, he starts barking from the rooftop. Once a child came to see Bholenath, and I asked him, "What will you do? Bholenath will start barking and this may cause you heart trouble!" He does not need any hints. He understands English. When I say, "Get in," he goes inside, and when I say, "Okay, now you sleep," he lies down. He understands all these things. His mother and father were showdogs. His grandparents were also showdogs in the circus.

There is another dog here from Orissa who lives on the other side. Her name is Bhairavi. Her father is a CBIinspector. When she came here, the police department sent a policeman to train her. I told him, "As you are training her, it would be better if you could train him also." When he came in for Bholenath's training, Bholenath immediately attacked him. I called him a rascal, then he left the trainer alone. Bholenath's stance is clear, "I have one master and he is enough for me. I do not want two masters." No flirting with gurus and teachers; one is enough. If one is not enough, then many can do nothing.

Bholenath does not like medicine, but if you give him milk products like cheese, he will not eat anything else, not even mutton. His preference is for dairy products. He likes rasagulla, paneer and all pure milk products very much. He does not eat onion, garlic, tomato, green vegetables or bread. If he is given bread with butter on it, he licks the butter off and leaves the bread. He breaks bones as you people break biscuits. He never goes to the toilet without my permission. Now I understand when he needs to go, otherwise he will sit quietly the whole day.

If you can meet him, you will see that he is a very beautiful and intelligent dog. Dogs are always intelligent. They are the combination of two opposite qualities; very affectionate and very ferocious; very greedy and very contented. All dogs are like that. Bulley Shah writes:

*You keep awake at night and pray.
Dogs also do that at night,
They are superior to you.
Dogs living in a heap of sweepings
Also bark without caring for the listeners.
They are superior to you.
They do not leave the doors of their master,
However they are beaten or kicked.
They are superior to you.
Bulley Shah says: following the path of sadhana,
Earn something with eagerness
Otherwise the dogs will beat you, surely.*

Do you know about the sleep of a dog? Bholenath can be in deep sleep, resting completely, and suddenly get up in a split second. So there is no question of laziness. In the evenings, I sit with him. He comes in my dreams and I dream of him very often. A God has been invoked in Bholenath. According to the tantric system, there is a method of invoking a deity and I have invoked Bhairava in him. He bit his doctor the same day!

Swamiji, is transmigration, *punarjanma*, and appearance of a man in animal form a rare phenomenon?

The laws of the universe have been made by God and nature looks after the implementation of these laws. Our laws are made by the government and the administration, and the judiciary looks after their implementation. The birth of a man is determined by his karma and passion. Passion means strong desire. Let us take a very gross example. If someone has a very strong desire to live with me, to serve me, that passion will certainly create an opportunity, and he will some day come into contact with me.

I was in great need of a dog when I began my panchagni sadhana. While performing panchagni, I live like an avadhoota. At that time, I am a completely different person. I am not intellectual; I am just a little bit crazy. I have so many acquaintances; so many people think they have rights over me. However, I do not think about anybody. I have no feelings, no emotions. They, however, want to see me. A female sannyasin once walked in through the gate. The gatekeeper, a laborer, tried to stop her, but she said, "I have known Swamiji for twenty years."

Swami Satsangi called me and said, "Someone wants to see you and she will not listen to me." So, I got dressed and came out. After that, I was thinking and thinking, "What should I do now? How can I manage this situation?" Here is a problem. If you want to come in and the gatekeeper stops you, you will start fighting with him, because your association with me has been much longer than my association with the gatekeeper. You have that ego in your mind, so you say, "No,

Swamiji has stayed with me and I have known him for so many years. I do not even know you.” So, some time later, when Swami Niranjan came with Bholenath, I decided to keep him here.

Aren’t animals supposed to be inferior to humans?

There is no difference between the human race and the animal species. We think on the basis of the human standard and consider the animal species to be lower, but this is not true. I have pondered over it and concluded that animals also possess intelligence and wisdom. They have their dharma and adharma. They too are subject to anger, desire and jealousy. They also observe certain rules and break them. They are not afraid of each other. Snakes, foxes, deer, leopards and elephants live together in the same forest. They are only afraid of man. I know this is so, because I have lived amongst them. They are only afraid of man who kills them without reason.

Birds can sleep in your room; they do not mind it. However, they are afraid that you may kill them when you get angry. Birds are not afraid of anything in the forest. There you can find snakes, scorpions, deer, antelope and many other creatures. They have their own laws. A deer will not rape a goat; a horse will not rape a cow. Never think that animals are inferior to us; they are superior incarnations. How can you say that they are inferior, simply because they do not have something that we have? They have many things that we do not. There are many good qualities in animals which we do not have.

When Swami Niranjan is coming from Munger, Bholenath knows when he is fifteen miles from here, if the wind is blowing from the North to the South. If the wind is blowing from the South to the North, Bholenath knows that Swami Niranjan is coming when he turns from Deoghar towards Rikhia. So, there are certain instincts which animals have and we do not. In the same way, there are some things which we have, and they do not. We have our limitations and they have theirs.

How can you say that they are inferior to us? Are they? Can you survive in the wilderness of the forest, as they can? No, you can't survive there. So, they have that extra quality which we do not have. There are certain qualities which we have and they do not, and there are others which they have and we do not. Therefore, are we inferior to them or are they inferior to us, or are we superior to them or are they superior to us? Think about it.

Can animals do sadhana like a man?

Do you think animals do not remember God? Have you asked any animal? Cows do not chew their cud at the time of dawn or dusk. If you observe the behavior of cows at these times, you will notice it. Why should animals remember God's name when they live with Him? When I am living with my husband or wife, why should I remember his or her name? When I am living with God, I do not have to remember Him. When I am with my friend, why should I remember him? I remember him only when I am not with him.

*The picture of the Lord is in the mirror of the heart;
You can see Him whenever you bend your neck.*

Similarly, animals are very close to nature and to God. Nature is a manifestation of divinity. Freedom is the expression of God. Animals are free. They sleep on the ground; they do not drink filtered water or take hot baths. They do not need dunlop mattresses, socks or jackets. They do not require many comforts. They run and run for their food and, according to the laws of nature, they live for ten, twelve, twenty, thirty, fifty or seventy years. They follow the laws of nature.

For example, we can go to our women every day, but animals will not mate unless nature allows them. Can you restrain yourself as they do? Now, tell me, who follows God's laws? We do not even know when our peak period is. Do you know when your peak period is? No, because you have never lived with nature; you have lived in the artificial, man-made society. Therefore, you do not know when your peak period is.

So, when your husband comes to you, you cannot say no! How silly! Bhairavi will not allow Bholenath, and he will simply sniff, no more.

Now, who is nearer to nature? Animals observe the laws of nature and, therefore, they are nearer to God. They do not need to do japa. You remember God only if you are not with him. You remember your son, wife or husband only if you are away from them. When you are with them, you need not remember them. All animals: cows, oxen, horses, dogs, snakes, scorpions, monkeys, and so on, observe the laws of nature. You should understand this.

We are discussing whether human beings are superior to animals or animals are superior to human beings, and in which respects; whether animals are aware of God or human beings are aware of God. The question is, do animals practise japa, kirtan, asana, pranayama, nauli, basti and other yogas? I say that they do not have to. You violate the laws of nature, and in order to compensate for that, you practise yoga.

Tigers practise vyaghra kriya. After they eat meat, they eat grass and regurgitate the excess meat. A tiger knows the laws of nature. When his stomach is overloaded, he goes out in the evening, finds the proper grass and chews it. The grass goes down and he throws all the food out. When he is not hungry, he will not even go near food. When animals are sick, they will not eat food; they leave it. What do we do? First, we go to a doctor and ask what we should do. So it is a very controversial question: who is superior and who is inferior? It is our claim that we are spiritual and animals are not. Perhaps dogs have superior intelligence and are equally devoted to divinity, as we claim to be.

In yoga, we learn all the animal poses: cobra pose, peacock pose, and so on. We practise these poses occasionally, but they practise them all the time. Snakes are always in bhujangasana, and we can do it for only a few seconds or minutes. Peacocks are always in mayurasana, but if we do it for a few moments, our faces become red! Most of the asanas are named after animals and such asanas influence our corresponding glands.

We live in the world as householders. We do virtuous things and we also commit wrongs and sins. We speak the truth and we also tell lies. Will all these things come with us in our next life?

Whatever man thinks or does becomes a samskara which cannot be eliminated. It is recorded or registered in his mind and brain. Whether its impact is strong or weak is a different thing. Sometimes this samskara remains for many years and for many births.

*Kabir says, our karmas never go in vain.
Even if there is a barrier of seven oceans,
They will come and catch hold of us.*

If the samskara is not very powerful, it may go or it may not. Man cannot ignore any action; every action, thought and form of man's awareness is recorded. His mind or brain is like a computer camera. Everything that comes into the area of the camera is recorded in the picture.

*The results of the karmas cannot be avoided,
Even by strenuous efforts.
A wise man, no other than Muni Vashishta,
Fixed the date most thoughtfully
For the marriage of Lord Rama.
In spite of that, the abduction of Sita,
Death of King Dasaratha
And many sufferings occurred.
King Harishchandra was sold into mean hands
And Bali was forced into the underworld.
The Pandavas, whose charioteer
Was Lord Krishna himself,
Had to suffer tremendously.
Kabir says: That which has to happen
Occurs without fail.*

Some of the karmas are not strong. They stay on line, as if they were electromagnetic. You have also seen that when you sit for meditation, your mind is one-pointed, and then suddenly thoughts start coming. These are inner thoughts;

either you take them out or you come out. There are different brainwaves; that is biological, but it is also psychological and spiritual. The thought is not merely a biological process; it is there and it will go with you. The thoughts which you had at Patna, Delhi, Kolkata or wherever you were ten or fifteen years ago are still remembered. This means they are within you. You remember something you have heard or seen ten, fifteen or twenty years ago. If these impressions are still with you after such a long period of time, they will remain with you even after leaving the body.

Samskara and consciousness are not the dharma of the body. This body is a chariot, and it has a charioteer and a passenger. It is driven by ten horses which are the ten indriyas, five jnanendriyas and five karmendriyas. *Buddhi*, or intellect, is its charioteer and *jivatma*, the individual soul, is the passenger. The charioteer is driving the horses. One day you leave the body; the chariot and the horses are left behind. The jivatma then takes another chariot. How good or bad that chariot is depends upon the earnings or *karma*. If you have money, you can buy a Maruti car, otherwise you will just have a bicycle. That is your earning or karma from the present life, and also from many previous lives.

I am also performing karma. In fact, what I am doing is a preparation for the next life or birth. This life is as it is. By the grace of God, I have had a good guru, good friends, good opportunities and a favorable environment. I have also had the grace of Saraswatiji, Lakshmiji, Durgaji, Brahmaji, Vishnuji, Shankaraji and all the other gods and goddesses. They have given me a lot, and I have also been spending whatever I have received from them. But,

*Fold, fold your bedding quickly,
March on for the forward journey.
Do you consider this inn of the world
As your own dwelling place?*

So, God has told me, "Now, you have to accumulate your own earnings. Get up and fold your bedding. Stop your present journey. You have mistaken this worldly inn for your

home. This is not your home; you have to leave it.” After all, how long can you stay in a hotel? This world is a hotel for you; you have to leave it one day. The longer you stay in a hotel, the more rent you have to pay. It may be five hundred dollars or five hundred rupees. You have wrongly considered this worldly inn to be your home. Kabir has said:

*You are not to stay here
This is quite a foreign land.
This world is a folded piece of paper,
It is dissolved by a few drops of water.
This world is a garden of thorns,
By getting entangled, one is sure to die.
This world is bushy and thorny,
It quickly catches fire and one is sure to burn.
Kabir says: O brother sadhu,
The name of satguru is the real destination.*

Can we ever exhaust our karma?

The karma you have accumulated can be eliminated or exhausted, but this is a very difficult task. It is possible to achieve this through vairagya. *Vairagya* does not mean that you leave your home. It means the absence of *raga* or desire, detachment from the penetration or intrusion of something into your mind. When you are constantly lost in the same thought, that is called *vasana* or passion. Getting rid of it is known as vairagya.

The definition of vairagya given in the *Yoga Sutras* (1:15) is quite relevant: *Drishtaanushravika vishayaavitrishnasya vashikara sanjna vairaagyam*. The meaning of the words used in this sutra are as follows: *drishta*, seen; *anushravika*, heard; *vishaya*, object; *vittrishnasya*, of the one who is free of desire or craving; *vashikara*, control; *sanjna*, awareness; *vairaagyam*, absence of craving.

The meaning of the sutra is quite clear. When an individual becomes free of craving for those sensory objects which he has experienced as well as for those of which he has heard, that state of consciousness is vairagya. Therefore, one should not have desires. Craving means thirst, which one feels when

there is no water but there is a desire to drink. How will you enjoy the world? The thirst, the craving for enjoyment is still very much there. Once the mind becomes free of this craving, that state is vairagya. This vairagya is not the end; it is a break.

What comes next?

Next comes *bhakti* or devotion. Bhakti does not only mean worship or ritual. Bhakti implies faith in God and discovering a relationship with Him. You have already discovered relationships with men and women, young and old: with your father, father-in-law, brother, brother-in-law, son, or with your wife, sister, daughter, mother or mother-in-law. Similarly, discover a relationship with God. This, is the most difficult task, but once you do it, life becomes much easier.

God is as real as anything else. You cannot say that you have not seen God, and therefore, you do not believe in Him. There are many things which you have never seen, and you never will, but they do exist. Due to your limitations, you cannot deny the existence of these things. It is not logical to think that, 'I have not seen this or that, therefore, it does not exist.' This is certainly not sensible logic. You have not seen God, but this does not mean that He does not exist. Down through history, there have been many people who have had divine experiences: our rishis, munis, yogis and seers; Moses, Christ, Mohammed, Buddha and many others. Their experiences may be different; they have given their own definitions. Many of the experiences of such people have not even been recorded. In *Narada Bhakti Sutras* it is said:

*When God is glorified through bhakti,
He at once manifests and causes
The devotee to realize Him. (80)*

Therefore, discover a relationship with God. A great saint, Raidas, established a wonderful relationship with God:

*O my Lord, Thou art sandal and I am water.
Thy fragrance has scented all my limbs.
My Lord, Thou art a lamp*

*And I am the wick
Whose light is burning day and night.
My Lord, Thou art a pearl
And I am its thread,
Just as gold shines by its own brightness.
O Lord, Thou art Master
And I am Thy servant.
Raidas is a devotee of this order.*

Do you know the story of Mirabai? She was the queen of Chittor, but her family and household environment were agonizing for her. Her relations could not understand her, and several times they tried to kill her. She went to Vrindavan, where she lived with an eminent guru named Maharaj Vijayakrishna Goswami. She went to his place and expressed her desire to meet him. His disciples told her that he did not meet any females. She told them, "I thought there was only one purusha in the universe. Where did this second purusha come from? Now, I must have his darshan, please help me." Goswamiji was very much impressed by this statement and he made her his disciple. The meaning is clear: there is only one purusha and infinite prakriti. God is purusha and we are all prakriti.

The relationship between a devotee and God is the same as that between a woman and a man. All of us are women, and we belong to the same, the only one, purusha. This is the concept of Samkhya philosophy which implies one purusha and infinite prakriti.

Kabir regards himself as follows:

*O Mother, Hari is my lover, Hari is my lover,
My soul cannot live without Hari.
Hari is my lover and I am the wife of Rama,
Rama is elder, I am the younger beloved.*

Shouldn't the guru help us to search for this relationship?

Why should I search for you? You search for yourself if you have the capacity. Search for your own soul and discover your own relationship. Why should I find a man for you?

How is this relationship with God different from the relationship with guru?

You can see God even in guru and develop a relationship with Him that way, but do not think that I will come to your bedroom! That is the only basic difference. This relationship with God is spiritual, deep, intrinsic and ultimately natural. It has nothing to do with this body. The body will not be with you always, but the soul will be with you forever. After death, the body will not follow you, but your karma will. 'Just as a calf recognizes his mother out of thousands of cows, similarly, karmas done in previous lives follow the doer.'

Why is the father-son relationship less intense?

Society has made us the sons of our fathers, but a child always belongs to the mother, maybe not according to law, but according to prakriti. All children belong to their mothers, according to the law of nature. However, your society is a dangerous society, therefore, they use the expression 'father's son'. If somebody asks, "Whose son are you?" you always name your father. However, you should remember that we all talk in our mother tongue. You never say father tongue. If Sanskrit is your mother tongue, what is your father tongue?

We also say motherland, never fatherland. It is the mother whose sons we are, not the father. Father came somewhere in between, as a breakthrough. We are all mother's sons. Therefore, it is the relationship between mother and child which is strongest and most intense. This is the same relationship that you can develop with God. She is the mother and I am her son. We always say, Devi Ma, Kali Ma, Durga Ma, Bhagavati Ma. We do not say that God is our father, but we often say, *Tvameva maataa cha pitaa tvameva*: "God is our mother, and therefore, He is our father also."

Kabir sings:

*Nothing to take and nothing to give,
Always be carefree.
This cage is made of five elements,
Inside is a singing bird.*

*The river is deep and the boat is old,
You should be friends with the boatman.
Your lover resides in your own house,
O my dear, see Him with open eyes.
Kabir says, you should always remain
Embracing the feet of the guru.*

Satsang 10

November 21, 1994, Afternoon

This place has a very interesting history. Sri Aurobindo's father and mother lived in a town near Deoghar. Before leaving for Pondicherry he came here to meet his wife. The *mukhia*, or chief, of Rikhia was here at that time and he remembers the visit. A few years ago, another mahatma from Assam, Solmuri Baba, came here. You may have read of him in the newspapers; he was thought to be Subhash Chandra Bose in disguise. There were several newspaper reports about him. He stayed here one full year. The family that lived on this property used to attend to these people, so this land has a spiritual *sanskara*.

The inhabitants of Rikhia are innocent and simple folk. In fact, we are like one family. They bring chapatis and vegetables for me. Whenever they do Kali pooja, they bring prasad for Bholenath. Right now, they are engaged in harvesting paddy. Out of the paddy they will make flat rice and offer it at the Deoghar temple. It is an age old tradition to offer it there, but since I have come here, they first offer it to me. So, by the end of this month, I will have quintals and quintals of flat rice.

I do not consider my work as charity, because these people are like family. When you go to a temple, they offer you prasad. Likewise, when I complete one *anushthana*, one round of practice, I give them some prasad. This year it is going to be a bumper prasad! We have already called the chiefs of the villages. They are making lists of each family.

Everyone will get a share. They are all in touch with me. The school children have already come with their teachers. These games are for the children. Today cricket balls have come; this is my luck. We have cricket teams here. The children like cricket very much, because they have very good concentration.

Another surprising thing is that every building you see in the Alakh Bara has been constructed by the local people, residing within a two kilometer radius. They have not even called anybody from Deoghar. The electricity, carpentry, civil engineering, preparation of land and planting of trees has all been done by them. Of course, they are being paid for that. We have people with the knowhow, who can construct anything. This kutir where I live, which is constructed entirely out of mud with a thatched roof, is an environmentally friendly house.

It seems that you favor women. Is this so?

Wherever I go I favor women and because of that many people have told stories about me, but it is too late now. All the girls like me, because I say, “Go and get educated, go to university, go to college, graduate.” Society discourages them.

Do you consider acting an art? How can one play the different roles without being caught up in them?

Whenever you act, you have to disidentify yourself from your own personality. If you play the role of a father, then you have to forget that you are Mr. So and So, and identify yourself totally with the father. When you play the role of a lover, who is in love with a girl, you have to identify with her so much that you feel she is really your beloved. You do not think that you are acting at that time. This is the best actor. Then there are the pitfalls and they are also part of the drama.

The different roles which an actor plays should not influence his real identity. That art you have to learn. How did Janaka, the father of Sita, live? He was a very great king, a learned man and the disciple of Sage Yājñavalkya. Janaka

was said to be a videha mukta. When Rama came to Mithila, Janaka was moved. He said, "I am losing my personal identity. I am videha, nothing belongs to me. I am not the body, not the mind, not the senses, not the indriyas. I am absolute Self." When he saw Rama, he forgot everything. He fell in love with him.

*By looking at the sweet and lovely Rama,
King Janaka lost his body consciousness.*

I have corrected many people in the film line, because they think that when they go into films, they fall and commit sins. There are many pitfalls in the film line, because you cannot be a good actor, a hero, unless you identify yourself totally with the role. At that time, you have to forget who you are and only remember that you are a lover, embracing your sweetheart. She is everything to you. You do not just sing a love song, you have to feel it, and this is the pitfall.

When that scene is complete, there must be total disidentification, and that art I will teach you. I have practised it. That art can only be practised when you do not have a guilt complex. If you suffer from guilt, you can never get out of it, because the very concept of sin is disastrous for the human personality. When you identify totally with the things that are happening around you and cannot disidentify yourself from them, then you are a sinner. What is right and what is wrong? Where did you get your notions about dharma and *adharma*? From vedic grammar, Islam, Christianity, or from the modern social system? Who has defined what is right and what is wrong? There is no absolute concept. What you dislike is *adharma* and what you like is dharma.

Now, you do not want to act, because you think of all these pitfalls. I say no. Rama acted, Krishna acted. How Rama wept when Sita was kidnapped by Ravana! He was asking every tree, every creeper, every animal, "Where is my Sita? Have you seen which way she went? Who has taken her?" Lakshman said, "Brother, you were so wise. You used to give us *upadesh*, instructions, and balance our minds. What has happened to you?"

*Alas Sita, the daughter of king Janaka,
The fountain head of all virtues,
You are pure in form, nature,
Resolution and conduct.
Lakshman consoled Him in many ways,
But he went on asking the creepers
And the leaves of the trees:
O birds, O animals, O group of black bees,
Have you seen Sita who has eyes like a doe?*

When Rama sent a message to Sita through Hanuman, the message was so poignant: “Since you have gone, the rain that falls is boiling, the birds that sing prick my heart.”

*Rama said, O Sita, your separation
Has turned everything against me.
The new leaves of the trees
Have become like glowing fire to me.
The night is like death,
The moon has become the burning sun.
The collection of lotus flowers has become a jungle of darts
And the clouds are pouring boiling oil.
All that was pleasant earlier has become painful now.
The cool, fragrant and slow breeze is blowing
Like a serpent’s breath.*

But if you believe in the thought, “I am pure consciousness, blemishless; nothing can touch me, then when something touches you, it only touches your external body, not your mind or soul. If you embrace a woman, what happens? You are only embracing some skin, creating some emotions for a short time, and entertaining these fools, that is all.

You know Sanskrit very well. Do you also know Tamil?

Sanskrit is my *matribhasha*, mother tongue. Tamil is my guru’s language.

How can a dog be a dedicated disciple?

More than two decades ago Bholenath met with an accident.

Since then he has been searching for me. This is his third incarnation after that accident. He has the same qualities that he had when he was a human being: dedicated, devoted, loyal and one-pointed. He does not flirt with many masters; he has only one master. A dog and a disciple, a donkey and a guru must have similar qualities. I knew it was him last year when I had a dream about him. I frequently have dreams of Bholenath. He was disclosing things to me, but I was so foolish, I never thought that my disciple would become a dog! I thought he would come back as a great man, but I made a mistake.

Dogs are more dedicated than disciples. Disciples can betray you; dogs will never betray you. Disciples have their motives; dogs have no motives. Bholenath has no motive; he is *nishwarth*, selfless, totally devoted, one-pointed and fearless. Kabir has said:

*So what if you give your body and mind?
It is very difficult to surrender your heart.
Kabir says, how to believe such a servant
Whose surrender is only partial?*

Bholenath does not care whom I like or dislike. "I do not like anyone," that is what he says. He will not allow the swamis who knew him at the age of six months to come in. No swami can get into my kutir, even with my permission. He says, "I do not want them." If any thief or man with bad intentions comes here, Bholenath will smell everything after he goes, and his hair will rise. In this way, he will indicate that a bad man was sitting here and I know it.

*If Hari is displeased, then the guru is a shelter.
But when Bhole is displeased, there is no place of safety.*

During building construction, there were a few petty thefts here. He caught all of them. The construction supervisor took a pipe out and Bholenath caught him. Three days later he gave notice to him. Ultimately, we found out that Bholenath was right. Everybody in the locality knows about it.

This morning I was talking about Bholenath's greatness. Whatever dakshina you have brought with you will go to the

Bholenath Readymade Store. The swamis are now making detailed lists of all the villages. After 17th December, the trucks will be loaded with the parcels of prasad and everything will be given to the villagers systematically, in the presence of the village chief. They all know it is Bholenath's prasad.

When people from North Bihar come to Deoghar with Ganga water, they sing this song of Vidyapati:

O Bholenath, when will you remove my afflictions?

I was born in suffering

And in suffering I spend my life.

O Bholenath, I have never known happiness.

O Bholenath, I can give you nothing,

Except rice, sandal, the water of Ganga

And wood-apple leaves.

O Bholenath, the ocean of the world is fathomless.

Come in the shape of Bhairavi and hold my hand.

Vidyapati prays that Bholenath be his salvation.

O Bholenath, grant me the boon of fearlessness.

O Bholenath, when will you remove my afflictions?

So this is how a soul searches for another soul, life after life, incarnation after incarnation.

Trikut mountain

They say this year there is a very good harvest. It is verdant green all around the Alakh Bara. From the top of Tribuvanam, you can see all around with binoculars for miles and miles. It is a beautiful scene. East of here is a very beautiful mountain called Trikut. Next time you come, be prepared to do some trekking. Trikut mountain is a lovely place. There are many caves, tigers, pythons and other snakes. Maybe I will go there after I leave this place.

Village shop

In these villages all the houses are made of mud; very few people use bricks. I think a time is going to come when our civilization will have to pull down the brick houses and make pure mud houses. My kutir is a pure mud house. People the

world over are becoming aware of the environment and the need to purify the water and the atmosphere. The more we think about it, the more we have to revolutionize our way of living. A simple life, no matter how humble, is a healthy life.

Yesterday you visited a house and shop nearby, which Sivananda Math has made for a family. That shop has a story which I will tell you. On 7th September, in the evening, I was inside when a boy came to the door and said to Swami Satsangi that he had not eaten for the last three days. She informed me. I was surprised because his father is close to me. He is a very modest and humble man; he always hesitates to ask for anything. He is truthful and never tells lies. I often send ten or twenty kilos of rice and other grains to him.

8th September is the birthday of my guru, Swami Sivananda. Every year on this day, I offer a little assistance to one who is in need. So, I said to the boy's father, "Okay, you open a shop in the village and I will provide the initial investment. Because I cannot give charity; I do not believe in it. It is not good to give charity, because charity is the mother of poverty. You can help me and I can help you; that is alright. But no charity." So they opened a shop. We invested four or five thousand rupees, which is not much. The shop sells biscuits, detergents, hair clips and other things that villagers use and we too buy our necessities from his shop.

The villagers are very happy. They all come to him in the evening and he arranges kirtan for them. He knows asanas, and has studied Sanskrit. In the morning, he goes to the local schools and teaches surya namaskara, asana and pranayama. I do not teach or even talk about yoga, but most of the village schools are now starting to teach asana and pranayama. I do not meet them. I am meeting people only during this one month. After that, full stop.

What are the rules regarding mantra and ishta devata?

If you practise only for spiritual attainment, then there are certain rules. However, if you practise with a particular end in view, there are different rules. Each ishta mantra has a corresponding devata and yantra, and you have to proceed

accordingly. But if you are practising the mantra for spiritual evolution and the development of your inner awareness, then the mantra can be one and the ishta devata can be another. Both do not have to correspond.

In practices for spiritual attainment, emotions come into the picture. Let us say that I have a very strong feeling for Rama; I like his lifestyle, his divinity. However, my mantra is not the Rama mantra; it is the Shiva mantra. Here the mantra does not correspond to the ishta devata. It does not matter since I am not doing it for any particular purpose, but for the purification of the inner awareness, to have a vision of the divine. So first, you have to decide whether you wish to practise for spiritual or worldly attainment.

In spiritual life, a guru is most important; there can be no two opinions about it. It is also true that you can visualize your guru and pray to him. But you should know that the ishta devata belongs to the esoteric, spiritual, divine, non-physical dimension.

How did you come to lead a spiritual life?

I am a book of many chapters, and each chapter begins and ends somewhere. Though there is a break between the chapters, there is a continuity as far as the story is concerned. The chapters break but the story continues on. This period of my life is one chapter. Once I remembered the promise I had made to my ishta devata in 1963, at Nasik, I left Munger and visited a number of siddhateerthas. Finally, in the monsoon season, I went to Trayambakeshwar, because sannyasins are not supposed to move around for a minimum of two months during the rains. That is a rule which I had never followed; this was the first time I followed it.

It was the 14th July, I remember it well. I was staying in a small room, eight square feet, which was part of a cow shed. One of the swamis began to cry, "How can you live like this?" because he had formerly seen me living in air conditioned rooms. A man came from Barcelona with his wife and she asked, "Why do you live here? Why can't you stay in a hotel in Mumbai and practise?" They live in a big, palatial house in

Barcelona with a bar and every convenience. I replied, "Then how will I have darshan of Trayambakeshwar?" She said, "You can come here every day in our taxi, but live there." This is the way people think!

On the 14th July, in the evening, I sat down and said, "Lord, I have come. All my duties are over. I am empty and, so to say, unemployed. What should I do next? I want your guidance!" I was alone. In the middle of the night, a storm began. There was torrential rain and lightning, outside and inside both! Then the instruction came, "Twenty-one thousand, six hundred times." I understood what it meant, because this was what I had been teaching. So, I started the sadhana from that day.

Two or three days after I arrived there, the local people started coming to me with bidi and chillum. It is the tradition in India that whenever a sadhu sits near a fire, people gather around him and offer him chillum, ganja and bidi. This continues every evening. I said, "My god!" The place was not mine; it belonged to Juna Akhara. The next day, I sent a message to the chief of that property which said, "Please, stop them. I have not come here to live. I have come here for a short period for a particular purpose. Do not bother me." So they stopped.

The next thing I needed to know was where to live, because that was not a permanent place. I had asked to stay there for two months only. Prior to that, I was at Gangotri where I met another sadhu who had two caves. He said to me, "I have a cave for you, which is in a beautiful place right on the banks of Ganga. It is in a big rock and there are two passages and two big round holes inside, one for me and one for you."

From Gangotri I went down to Rishikesh and stayed in my guru's ashram. The swami there also said, "There is a lot of property, so make a hut and stay here." I said, "Okay, it's a good idea." However, I did not like Rishikesh, because it is the place of my spiritual birth, my spiritual education, and it is the place of my guru. It is also a pilgrimage place which is easily accessible. Anybody can purchase a ticket and go to Rishikesh. There are many trains, planes, taxis. Day and night, people are coming and going, which I do not like.



Sri Swamiji, 1994



Entrance to Sri Swamiji's Sadhana Sthal – Panchdashnam Paramahansa Alakh Bava, Rikhiya



Alakh Bara. Satellite disk connects the village people with events and technology of the modern world



Raghunath Kutir



Chaura of Tulsi Devi at Paramahansa Alakh Bara



Mahakaal Chita Dhuni



Vedi where Sri Swamiji performed the ancient vedic panchagni sadhana



Sivamanda Charitable Dispensary where 200 rural patients received treatment everyday



Main building of Sivananda Charitable Dispensary



Tripura Kutir – an example of rammed mud housing as constructed in the villages by Sivananda Math



Brick-making site



'Govardhan' residence given to Sri Chandiraut of Lorhia village



Inside view of 'Govardhan'



Swami Satyasangananda, Karobari of Paramahansa Alakh Bara



Darshan of Sri Swamiji



Inner vision

My sadhana needs total seclusion. I do not want any botheration, even from the people who are at the gate or who cook the food. For days together, I should be the king of silence, total solitude. I do not need society, friendship and love during that period. Of course, these are God's gifts to mankind, otherwise we would all be neurotic. But I do not need anything at that time.

*O my friend, I love to be a hermit.
The pleasure which I gain in reciting the Name
Is not to be found in affluence.
You should listen to good and evil dispassionately,
But you should spend your life in poverty.
My dwelling place is in the city of Love
And I am totally at ease in contentment.*

So, Rishikesh was out of the question. Next, I went to Mount Abu, a beautiful place in Rajasthan. Nearby there is a big mountain called Gurushikar, the topknot of guru. There you have Dattatreya's footprints.

Dattatreya – avadhoota guru

Dattatreya was the son of Atri and Anusuiya. He was a great yogi like Jesus Christ, Shankaracharya, Buddha and Moses. He initiated hundreds and thousands of ordinary people into spiritual life. He did not consider caste, creed, religion, ability or inability. He said, "Do you want spiritual life? Get in!" "Do you drink? I don't mind." A prostitute came and he said, "Do you want spiritual life? Come on! This is your mantra; this is the method. Now, go and do what you like." He had a very great following.

Dattatreya's tradition is that of the naga babas, who remain unclothed. He himself used to remain unclothed. Dattatreya is the avadhoota guru. The story is that his father was a debauchee, who went to prostitutes every night. His own wife, Anusuiya, was devoted to him. The time came when he had arthritis and could not walk. His wife said, "Do not worry, I will carry you on my shoulders to the prostitute's den." Sometimes she would wait outside for him, or else come back

in the morning to collect him. Such a woman's son became a great man.

In India, we respect Dattatreya as God. A wife taking her husband to a prostitute; can you believe that! Such a strong mind, such a strong lady, such a pure woman, is extraordinary, rare and unique. Therefore, she was able to give birth to a genius. Dattatreya told his mother, "I won't stay at home; I'm going away. I've come here only to awaken people to the higher spiritual life." His mother asked, "What is higher spiritual life?" Dattatreya replied, "Where there is no duality, no diversity; where there is only one substance, God, atma, param-atma." He threw away all his clothes and started on his journey.

Dattatreya went to four places in India. One of the places was Mount Abu which I have been talking about. At Mount Abu there is a cave where he practised constant *japa*. Another place Dattatreya went to is Girnar in Junagadh. This forest is the only place where you can see lions in India. There was a cave there and the swamis invited me to stay there. I liked that place very much, but water was scarce and water is my life.

Burial ground

I kept asking where to go, because I needed a place. So, in Trayambakeshwar, on the 8th September, in the early morning at four o'clock, the instruction came, "Cremation ground," where you bid farewell to the departing souls. Of course, there are so many cremation grounds in India. But in all the ancient books, this place is called *chitabhoomi*. *Chita* means 'burning of the body' and *bhoomi* means 'ground'. Deoghar is called the cremation ground, and this property came into my vision very clearly. That morning, Swami Satsangi had come from Mumbai, because it was my guru's birthday. She arrived by seven in the morning with some sweetmeats and other things. I prepared tea and said, 'Do not stay here. Just take tea, then go back and find this place. Ask Swami Niranjana to buy it quickly; I'm going there.'

She went by taxi to Mumbai, then flew to Patna and from Patna to Deoghar. From there she phoned Swami Niranjana and told him that she had found this place, which belonged

to a local businessman. He had intended to set up a stone crusher here, but could not, as the villagers objected to the pollution it would cause to the local environment. On the very same day, the 8th of September, the owner had also decided to sell this property. So, He tells me to go there, and He tells him to sell. This is not a coincidence. I have had many occurrences in my life like this.

In precisely three days it was decided, and on 11th September Swami Gyanprakash came to Trayambakeshwar to tell me the property was secured. On the 12th September, my sannyasa initiation day, the title deed was drawn up. I arrived here on the 21st September 1989, when the day and night are equal. I liked the place straight away. There was not a single tree or shrub growing here at that time. That stonecrusher had left all the little pebbles and stone pieces on the ground. I removed everything. Then many swamis came and made bricks. Many people have helped to give a shape to this place.

The first year I started the fire outside. The next year I took it in four directions: east, west, south and north. I am in the center and the sun is overhead. Nobody can come into the compound at that time. If anybody comes and meets me, it is a violation. In the beginning it was difficult, because people used to come and bash the gate, and I would have to come out and meet them. Finally, Bholenath came into the picture. He sits in the mandap, and if anybody comes, he gives me warning. Then he goes for him, and that person leaves very fast. Now nobody comes.

So, I had to decide how many years I would practise this panchagni sadhana, for five years, twelve years or for life. I decided on five years and made a sankalpa. The fifth year is now over. After this, the internal fire is extended. The external fire is made purely of cow dung, or cow balls, as they are called. When you leave, after this month is over, I will be sitting at the fire. When the sun enters Capricorn, I start sitting. When the sun enters Cancer, I move from there.

From Capricorn to Cancer, I have to be beside the fire all the time. This is because the external fire ultimately takes the form of a celestial fire. First, it is called the external fire,

then it becomes the internal, consumed fire, which is a high energy. If I am successful, it will become the celestial fire. What is celestial fire? Celestial fire and yoga are the same. When you perform yoga practices like pranayama, you develop that celestial fire within your body.

This is a very ancient practice which all cannot and should not try to do; it is not permitted. When desires become weak, when passions become very, very weak, when you do not want anything from anyone for any purpose, and can manage with just one meal and a little sleep, then you can practise this sadhana. If you have not extinguished those inner fires of passion, anger, greed and attachment, and you practise with the outer fires, you will die. The temperature rises daily from sixty degrees to seventy degrees celsius. The human body can stand such heat for one day, one week or possibly even for one month, but for years together it is not possible. You would die of dehydration or some other problem, but I did not die! One day, the temperature rose up to ninety degrees celsius. I have a thermometer which is also used in the bread oven. That day the wind was blowing. Sixty degrees is normal. In the early morning when the sun rises, it is thirty degrees. So from sunrise, I sit for three hours, then take a bath. Then again at midday, I sit when the sun is descending.

Throughout this period of sadhana, I have been very healthy. I believe I will continue to be healthy, because my guru said, "Unless you have worked out your karma, do not practise. Wait for forty to forty five years." From 1947 to 1989 is forty-two years. My main sadhana is awareness of the breath, and synchronizing the mantra with it. All the time there is constant awareness of the breath, synchronized with the mantra, mostly seated in this posture. I can also recline, keeping the yoga danda in this posture and keeping this little friend, the mala, with me all the time. She is my life partner; that is the main thing. My ultimate aim is non-stop awareness of mantra and breath, for twenty-four hours, from four o'clock in the morning of one day until four o'clock in the morning of the next day, 21,600 breaths, 21,600 mantras. Kabir has said:

*You should repeat such a japa
By pouring your whole heart into singing,
With constant awareness,
Soham, Soham.
If twenty one thousand and six hundred japas
Are repeated continuously,
The unstruck sound
Will spontaneously emerge.*

After that, if I can leave this body, while in that divine contemplation, I will not mind when it falls away.

I always pray, "Oh Lord, do me this one favor. When the breath stops, let my last word be your name."

*O Govinda, this is my prayer:
I should never forget Thy name.
May I sing Thy names day and night,
Govinda, Damodara, Madhava.*

*O Krishna, O Yadava, O Friend,
At the time of death, please come before me
Playing on the flute and delighting my mind.
I wish to sing Thy names while dying,
Govinda, Damodara, and Madhava.*

*O devotee, do you think this is your mind?
What did you bring when you came?
And what will you take when you depart?
Only these names will always remain with you,
Govinda, Damodara and Madhava.*

*This earth and dwelling place,
Your wife, sons, relatives and friends,
Are not your dearest companions.
You should call upon Hari, saying,
Govinda, Damodara and Madhava.*

*Our true friend is Hari alone.
He is our father, mother and dearest relative.
Don't forget to sing His name day and night,
Govinda, Damodara, Madhava,
O Krishna, O Yadava, O friend.*

The breath has to stop sometime. When a man dies, the breath stops either while inhaling or while exhaling. So, the last breath should be the awareness of the mantra. If I do not die in Vrindavan, Mathura or Jerusalem, it does not matter; the important thing is the awareness at the last breath. The *Bhagavad Gita* (14:14–15) says, “If the body meets death at a time when sattwa is predominant, the soul leaving the body, goes to the holy world of the wise. Meeting with death in rajas, the soul is reborn among those who are attached to action. Dying while in tamas, he is born in a womb having little consciousness.” I am confident that this will happen. There are thousands of people in India and abroad who include me in their prayers. They pray, “Lord, please help Swami Satyananda.” The prayers of these people will not go in vain.

What is the highest experience of your sadhana?

When I was in my twenties, I had many experiences which were very high and very deep, but I do not have those experiences now. They did not belong to the external world, the dream world or to the world of nightmares. That was a different world in which I lived for a very short time. Now, I want to have these experiences on my own, but not so fast. These experiences were given to me in my early years by the tantric yogini about whom I often speak and with whom I was involved when I was eighteen. She gave me those experiences during that period of sadhana, and they were astoundingly non-physical. They were not dreams; I can distinguish between dreams, nightmares and visions. They were experiences.

You call this perception, when I am seeing you and you are talking to me. If I can have the same experience without the senses, when the eyes, ears, mouth, mind, everything is shut, and my body is completely relaxed, then I can experience a different reality, which is as real as what I perceive here. I had these type of experiences with the help of that lady, where I lived in a different world for a very short span of time. She told me clearly, “I can give you this experience, but you cannot have it on your own. For that, you will have to acquire it by your own effort.” I asked, “How can I do that?” She said, “Find

a guru.” In 1943, I found a guru and he told me, “Wait,” so I am waiting.

This is one experience and I have had many others, where I received clear instructions on many matters. I have had very clear guidelines in my life, for the propagation of yoga, for the writing of books, even for building construction. I had seen the whole Ganga Darshan complex, each and every room, the electrical fittings, the sanitary fittings. Everything was clear to me and I told the architect, “Do this, this and this.” However, if I want to communicate with that ‘person’, I do not know how to do that. I am not keen to know and I never ask even, because if He wants to give the command, let Him. If He says, “You go to Deoghar and stay in this village,” that’s all right. When I have any difficulty, I will ask, “What should I do next?”

This is also a top experience, where you have an invisible, individual guide in your life, many times, not just once, who will show you everything, how the building has to be constructed, how the book has to be written, which place you should go. There are clear guidelines.

I have never done any practice for obtaining that experience, and I will not do any. I have never asked for it myself, but that experience was the first chapter of my life. This is the second chapter. I renounced my parents, family, home, and became a sannyasin, because I wanted to have that experience.

Now, more than fifty years have passed, but still I feel confident that I will experience that other reality. I will pass on to that dimension and stay there, never to come back. Then, if people find me crazy, they can put me before a psychiatrist; they can put me in the lunatic asylum. I will not mind; I will have a world of my own. I will not care what happens to the body. I will be alright, because I am peaceful, I have nice experiences. I will have another set of disciples; all the departed Australians, Greeks and Americans can come to me there. That is called another world.

Is the guru internal or external?

The guru is internal, and you can visualize him in any form you like. The form is not important. Your consciousness, atma

or spirit is your guru, and that you always have inside, not outside.

*The guru is within the temple of my mind.
The guru is my wealth and affluence,
The guru is my body, mind and all,
The guru is my life indeed.
He is the donor of the whole Universe,
And he is Narayana Bhagavan.*

You can visualize that guru in the physical form or in any other form, but it is better to have one form. However, to think that the guru is outside you is wrong; the guru is inside you. You have the guru element, the guru explosive, inside of you.

*The Self of every living being,
Especially amongst humankind,
Is his own guru;
Because by direct experience and intuition,
One is competent
To decide about one's wellbeing.*

I am just the trigger. You can use me as a trigger, but if you think that I am the stuff and you are the trigger, you are wrong.

What does the saying, 'I am what I am', mean in the spiritual sense?

Even if you abuse me, I cannot be disturbed. Nothing can disturb me, because praise, insult, love and hatred, are all vibrations. If you call me a donkey, and people have, I do not mind. I do not become a donkey, because you call me one. If you call me God, I do not mind, because I do not become God. I am what I am and I shall be what I shall be and, therefore, you cannot disturb me. However, if my medium should be helpful to you, so much the better.

I searched for a guru until the age of forty and could not find one that was suitable for me. At the age of forty-one,

I came in contact with the Gayatri family. At that time, Gurudev was doing subtle sadhana and I was initiated by one of his disciples. I started to practise mantra japa after initiation and made much progress. I experienced an awakening of gurutattwa, although I was unable to get darshan of the guru. I did not get the opportunity to touch his feet until he left his mortal body.

One year back, I obtained the book, *Jago Maa Kala Kundalini*. After going through it, I felt you are the guru whom I was searching for all these years. So, I started reading all your books and continued my sadhana at the same time. For the last year, I have been very eager to meet you, but I did not find time. Today it is my good luck that I am finally having your darshan. So, should I consider you as my guru?

No, your guru is Acharya Sri Ram Sharma. Once the guru is selected, he is selected. Once the wife is chosen, she is chosen; there is no question of changing. It is alright to get guidance from my views. I also stopped giving direct guidance twelve years back, so you will not get that from me either. I am entertaining people here; this is not guidance. Guru leaves the body, but he never dies. For example, when the bulb gets fused, it does not mean there is power failure. You only have to change the bulb; the electricity is still there.

This is the base of guru tattwa. Once you have chosen the guru, you must keep him forever. You neither feel sorry about him leaving the mortal body nor dejected about not touching his feet. To touch the feet is a social custom; there is nothing special in it. Whatever sadhana you have learned, do it like a child, do not use your mind. Sadhana is a subject of the heart, not of the mind. Sadhana is not a subject of the intellect; it is a subject of feeling and emotion. The foundation of feeling is *shraddha*, faith, and the base of intellect is argument. Intellect goes with argument and emotion with *shraddha*. There is no interrogation in *shraddha*, faith, and *vishwas*, belief. Where the intellect is concerned, there are always questions and answers. In faith and belief, there is no questioning.

Is it true that BSY will soon become a yoga university?

Yes, it will have university status. The University Grants Commission has already sent its team from Delhi for investigation. The university has funds, and many large properties, like Ananda Bhavan, are incorporated.

The chancellor and vice-chancellor have been nominated, and all the committees have been formed. They are working very hard to prepare the courses. There will be three faculties: Yoga Philosophy, Yoga Psychology and Yoga Applied Sciences. There will be two-year MA and MSc degree courses for graduates. However, yoga teachers of longstanding will also be considered, even though they are not graduates. The entry fee will be very high, not like an ordinary yoga course.

This university will have to give higher yogic training to thousands of people, so that yoga can be integrated into society at a professional level. When you graduate from the university, then you can seek employment anywhere in the world, wherever you are. So, it will be a very good thing. That is what everybody is waiting for. The Bihar School of Yoga will become a constituent school and its diploma will be honored by the university. The university will be registered with the Central Government and the University Grants Commission, which is the highest body of all the universities in India. There will be no barriers of sex, religion or nationality at this university.

I took initiation from you, but I had already been practising Gayatri japa. What should I do?

Since 1955, you have been doing japa of Gayatri mantra, hence you experience conflict. The conflict is of your mind. Conflicts are experienced in sadhana. You are following the path of bhakti sadhana. *Bhakti* means 'love for God'. Where there is bhakti, conflicts should not arise in the mind. Do not think; do your sadhana spontaneously.

What are your views on education?

Education is an industry and we have to deal with it as such. We produce human resources; we prepare technicians,

professors, lecturers, doctors, engineers, who work for society. Education must be considered as an industry, and every educational institution must finance itself and not depend on the Government. Then the educational institutions can remain free from political pressures and bureaucratic hurdles.

Education is an industry which produces human resources. We should not look at it from an idealistic point of view, and try to get money for it from this person and that person. Education is not charity. Education is an industry and it has to function as an industry. Bihar Yoga Bharati will produce yoga therapists, yoga psychologists, yoga ecologists, yoga philosophers and yoga professors.

There are many teachers in the world who teach yoga, and many doctors who give yoga therapy and yoga psychology, but they need a breakthrough. This will be the first university in the world to offer higher degrees in yoga. Swami Sivananda, my guru, wanted to establish such a university in Rishikesh, but it could not materialize for several reasons.

Is ecology a subject in the university? This is a subject which should go well with yoga.

I am thinking of adding one more subject, ecology, because yoga has much to do with ecology. Ecology has to be an academic subject, but I do not know if there are enough text books on this subject.

What do you foresee as the future of science?

Bhakti marga will be the science of the next century, and for this, the scientists have already done a great deal of preparation. Technology has been the outcome of science in this century. Devotion will be the outcome of science in the next century. The scientists have worked on technology, the principles of materialism, electronics, and so on, and they have given us some beautiful and miraculous things. In the next century, scientists will turn their eyes towards bhakti, and they will conduct research into the human psyche in the same way that they are doing research on matter, electronics, nuclear physics, and so on, in this century.

In the next century, they will work on faith, belief and devotion. They will discover the impact of devotion on the human mind, behavior and constitution, and its effect on society and civilization. It is clear that the scientists of the next century will have to work very hard. Then, spiritual discipline will not be known as religion or faith, but as a science of life. Just as we have been able to deal with space communication through electronic mediums, similarly, we will have to deal with the idiosyncrasies of humanity, with its complicated mind and its strange behavior, which I do not think science is able to control.

Nobody has control over the human mind and behavior today. This should develop when scientists realize that things are going wrong. Once they start thinking about this, there will be a revival of religion. But which religion should be revived? The religion which is based on logic and reasoning and which has a pragmatic approach.

In ancient times people used to take sannyasa at the age of seventy five. Should one take sannyasa at a young age?

Samskaras and habits of people change. To develop the qualities of *vairagya*, detachment; *tyaga*, renunciation; and *mumukshutva*, intense desire for liberation; without leading the traditional life of a sannyasin, is very difficult. I have seen this in many people. Secondly, only the young are suitable to adopt the path of sannyasa. Nowadays I see that those who take sannyasa at a later age have fixed habits of eating, sleeping, toilet, dressing, talking and meeting, which are very strange. They cannot change, because their habits have become set.

There are many sannyasis of Ramakrishna Mission who come to sannyasa after retirement and practise meditation. What about them?

They do service and good work. They wear geru clothes. They talk about vedanta and give spiritual discourses, but their lifestyle is not that of a sannyasi. Sannyasis have a totally different lifestyle. Sannyasa lifestyle is not austerity; I used to

wear clothes and a watch also. I have only one style: if there is cloth, it is okay; if there is no cloth, it is also okay.

Not only the sannyasa ashrams, but even the Christian monasteries are not successful, because they take elderly people. In the Christian religion, you will find that the elderly monks have more confusion than the younger monks. Those who become monks or nuns at a young age adapt very well, because they have an open mind. Their capacity of endurance and tolerance is very good. Those who become monks or nuns at the age of fifty-five or sixty, have a different mind. There is also a second point. When one takes sannyasa at an early age, then one is able to communicate with the present generation. However, when one takes sannyasa at the age of fifty-five, then one cannot communicate so easily.

Take myself and Swami Niranjan, for example. Niranjan can communicate more easily with the people of today. He knows how to talk with them and his personality is suited for that. He can think the way young men of this generation today are thinking, and I can think the way people used to think fifty years ago. Although I can adjust with the young generation, still my thinking pattern is what was inculcated in me fifty to sixty years ago. Therefore, when you take sannyasa at an early age, you can communicate with the realities, and when you take sannyasa at a later age, you cannot.

How does kirtan affect the vibrations of a place?

The place where God's name is remembered and sung becomes pure and holy. Where there is fighting and abuse, that place becomes unholy and impure. This place has become pure, because God's name is like soap. As soap cleans clothes, so God's name cleans the dirt of many births.

*Guru is the washerman
And disciple the cloth
Soap is the Creator
If washed on the stone of constant awareness
A brilliant glow is generated.*

God's name is like a detergent which cleans the karmas. It cleans the dross of the soul which you have accumulated throughout during the course of this life and many past lives. This place has been sanctified today by the singing of God's name.

When I am alone, I do kirtan myself, but singing alone is not kirtan. When many people are singing God's name together, that is kirtan. I sit here alone in the morning, singing *Om Nama Shivaya; Narayana, Narayana*, but that is not kirtan. When one sings God's name alone, it is called remembrance. So today kirtan was sung here for the first time, and we will have bhajan also. Do not feel shy, remembering God's name.

*To Him, whose name is Rama,
Whose abode is Ayodhya,
To this Raghunandan,
I bow down.*

*To Him, whose name is Krishna,
Whose abode is Gokul,
To this Madhusudan,
I bow down.*

*To Him, whose name is Shankara,
Whose abode is Kashi,
To this great liberator,
I bow down.*

*To Him, whose name is Satyananda,
Whose abode is Rikhia,
To this great bhakta,
I bow down.*

I used to sing from morning until night, and I knew thousands of bhajans in English, Tamil, Telegu, Bangala. Children liked the stories and singing. I used to sing the whole *Ramayana* in fifteen minutes in raag-raagini. I can sing all the cinema songs, even the latest ones. Just by listening, I pick them all up. Once I hear the songs which they sing in Mithila, in Hindi, they just come into my mind. I think that is the beauty of music. If you hear a poem once, you cannot remember it; prose takes time to go inside.

Satsang 11

November 22, 1994, Morning

I have had a sudden glimpse of the coming century. Yoga will go backstage and bhakti will take its place. *Bhakti* means devotion or love, pure love. Love will become prominent, not as a belief, but as a science. After all, you may not know what antibiotics are, but they have been researched and defined. In psychology, research has been done on brainwaves. Likewise, they will be doing research on someone like Mirabai. What changes took place in her body? How do you ascertain them? What waves were predominant in her brain? Were they beta, alpha, theta or delta? Or were they something else? The scientists will find out.

Mirabai was given poison, but it did not affect her. How did that happen? Christ was crucified for three days, yet he did not die. How did he remain alive? They hammered nails through his palms and feet and speared the side of his body. He was not a vigorous man, because he was a type of ascetic sadhu, yet he lived through that ordeal! How did he remain alive?

After the crucifixion, Christ departed from Israel and went somewhere near Italy, then he went to Iraq and finally came to Kashmir. The tombs of his mother and his friend, Mary Magdalena, are found in Srinagar. The tomb of Mary is named Mariam Ki Mazar. Christ reached India in the thirteenth year after his crucifixion. Actually, the lost tribes of the Jews lived in Kashmir. From there, they were led by their prophet Moses to Israel, their chosen or promised land.

The Jewish community is very enlightened and intelligent. Christ was a Jew, as were Newton, Einstein, Max Planck and Karl Marx. Many great men were Jews. Yehudi Menuhin, the renowned maestro, is a Jew. Jews are very brilliant people and they have some very nice traditions. For example, every Jew keeps a diary. The great holocaust that took place in Europe is documented from many different diaries.

A disciple's brother came to me one day in Paris and said, "My daughter is now uncontrollable! In the evening she wants to go out with boyfriends and we do not want her to do this." Finally, they sent her to Israel. They did not keep her in Paris, because she would be spoilt there. The concept of chastity for women is very strong in the Jewish religion, just as it is among Hindus. The woman has to be chaste, like Sita. Their rituals are also elaborate, like the Hindus.

Is it good for society to be orthodox?

Yes, orthodoxy is a deterrent; it stops people from going haywire. Just as the atom bomb is a deterrent to anarchy, in the same way, orthodoxy is a deterrent for society. Every woman cannot be chaste, but this orthodox principle acts as a deterrent. It makes people think twice, therefore, it is a good principle. At the same time, there have to be some breaks in society; there should not be fixed ideas. Every idea must be counterbalanced, otherwise this person will oppose somebody, who will then oppose somebody else. For example, you may worship God's form. Now, if I say, "No, it is wrong to worship any form. I am a nirakara worshipper and I do not like idol worship," then you reply, "No, devotees should worship God as form," there is conflict. So, there has to be some sort of balance, otherwise we will go from one extreme to the other.

What are your views on education?

I want to make one thing clear. Education is an industry. What usually happens is that educational institutions are sponsored and patronized by the government or by public institutions. That is so everywhere, even in the West. People

think that education is different from industry. In an industry you produce machines and people use them; they are the consumers. Education produces all of the engineers, scientists, factory workers, professors, teachers, nurses, doctors. If educational institutions did not produce them, can you imagine what the repercussions would be? If you consider education to be an industry, it has to be dealt with as an industry.

In the next two or three years, Bihar School of Yoga will become a yoga university, the first such university in the world, not only in India. It has already been registered in the name of 'Bihar Yoga Bharati'. We have decided to run this institution as an industry, to produce teachers and professors of yoga therapy, yoga psychology, yoga philosophy and yoga ecology. This facility will be available to other countries as well as to India, because the students will be from all over the world. Bihar Yoga Bharati intends to enlist a number of outstanding teachers and professors from India and all parts of the world.

Education everywhere has to be implemented in a different way, not with the monotonous methods that have been used. Free education will not give anything to a nation. Education has to be paid for. In any tradition, there is *diksha* and there is *dakshina*. *Diksha* means initiation, education, and *dakshina* means fees. If you want to receive initiation, but you do not want to pay the *dakshina*, your knowledge will not fructify. Therefore, there has to be a relevant connection, a relationship between *diksha* and *dakshina*. Perhaps everyone will not be able to attend universities. People spend so much money on enjoyment, drinking, and other frivolities, but they could study instead if they wanted to.

Introduction to Mahamandaleshwar Swami Poonyananda Giri, Acharya, Niranjani Akhara, Varanasi.

I have the privilege of introducing to you the officiating chief of my sannyasa tradition. As he happens to be here, I am asking him to address you and to give you his blessings. Although he will be speaking in his own language, it does not

matter, because spirituality has no language. It is the feeling which is important.

Swami Poonyananda Giri speaks on chintamani

In normal parlance, anything of value is called *mani* which normally means a precious stone. In the scriptures it is said that there is a special mani called *chinta*. The rest of the manis or precious stones have a price according to their worth, but the scriptures do not mention any price for the chintamani. Only if something is available can you name a price, but nobody has seen the chintamani. All the other manis have a relationship with the planets, according to their different natures, but what is the planet related with chintamani? This has not been clarified, but a lot has been said about the nature of chintamani.

Chintamani has the capacity of bestowing benevolence on the entire creation, and this has been greatly emphasized in the scriptures. When you think deeply about it, then you realize that chintamani is nothing other than the mind. The rest of the manis attract you by their external glitter, but the mind as such is a mani whose glitter is normally not visible. The mind attracts by its thinking power. That attraction is the quality of manis. We wear necklaces of precious stones with the thought in our minds that others will be attracted to us. Once the chintamani starts to shine, however, you do not have to think about attracting other people, then you have to worry about how to stop them from being attracted by you!

The chintamani is inside everybody in the form of the mind, but because it is covered by the veils of desire, it is not exposed. The ancient rishis and munis have said that if you want the chintamani to be powerful and effective, you have to remove its outer covering. To do this, you have to perform *tapas*, purification. If gold is covered by dross, you will not recognize it, and you might even throw it away. If that same nugget is put in the fire, the dirt is burnt away and the gold shines in its full glory. So, the shastras say that if you want to discover the pure mind, or the *chintamani*, do *tapas* and burn away all the dross, which is in the form of

desires accumulated over previous births. Then you will feel the power of chintamani.

The awareness of chintamani comes through experience. It is the attracting force of chintamani that has drawn you here from distant places. You should all go back with the inspiration that a priceless jewel is inside you. By tapas, you can remove the impurities from the chintamani mind and achieve the aim of this life.

Please talk about your life in Rikhia.

It is five years since I came here. The sixth year will be completed this September and I have now settled down here. In order to settle down in a place, you need time. Now everything is favourable, the neighbourhood, the weather, the water, and my mind as well. But I do not know about my chintamani. The day I came here, I made a sankalpa that after settling down, I will go only by God's orders. I am not a person to stay in one place long, and I used to get restless if I stayed for more than three to four months in one place. But this place is peaceful and the people of the neighbourhood are also very nice. I get my bhiksha from them.

Do you not get food from your establishment here?

Yes, they cook here also. The Munger people have a big establishment here, so it is necessary to cook for them. But I feel that it is much better if I retain contact with the local people and get bhiksha from them, even though the food may not be very good. Of course, if no food comes, then it is necessary to light a fire and cook.

These people visiting me during this darshan period are staying in Deoghar. They come every day in the morning from eight to eight-thirty, and they bring fruits and dry food with them for lunch. Then, in the evening, they go back to Deoghar to have dinner. There is no provision for food here. I did not leave Munger to start another ashram. First, you get a big cooking pot, then a basket, then two cooks, then a big drum, and then you start another ashram. I do not want to do this again.

If God wills it, won't that also happen?

I have a feeling that God is also not interested. If He had a wish like that, He would not have told me to get out of Munger. God wishes that, instead of cooking for Him or building ashrams in His name, every house should become a small ashram. A small house with two cows, children studying and singing God's name, family members working and earning their living. One ashram cannot do that much for humanity. Instead of one ashram, if every household becomes a mini ashram, then that would achieve far more. Ultimately the home is also an ashram, a *grihashashram*.

Every farmer should have one cow, two bulls, and a house with a thatched roof. He can be a labourer, a wood cutter, a carpenter or stone breaker. He earns fifty rupees per day and that is enough. He should have enough means to keep his children happy and to provide food for them. The environment should be pure. If this much is done, then we will have lots of ashrams all over the country. These will have married rishis and munis living in them, who will read *Ramayana* and *Bhagavata Purana* in the morning, and then the rest of the day they will plough their fields, sell vegetables or do some other work.

So, I am not interested in building another ashram. I have no inclination to do further karma. I want to follow the path of *nivritti*, withdrawal from the world.

What of the need for better medical care in the rural sectors?

Regarding medicine, I do not think that the developed Western countries like England, Germany and the United States have cures. Humanity does not have a cure. There may be a lot of poor people here who cannot afford medicine, but what about these countries who have the best medical care? They are more sick than these poor people here. Their ailments can only be cured by changing the quality of their lives, not by medicines. You must face reality. You cannot escape disease, old age and death, no matter what you do. Some people have constipation, diabetes, high blood pressure or paralysis. How can they lead proper lives?

What is your aim now?

I now have only one aim, which is to do unbroken japa for twenty-four hours with every breath, which means 21,600 times. To be aware of every breath, with no sleep, no drowsiness, no urination, no bowel movement, no hunger, no pain in the body. I just want this blessing from God. If you count fifteen breaths per minute, it works out to 21,600 times in twenty-four hours. I have not been able to do it yet; it seems impossible. Maybe all of you will do something to make it possible, and if the Lord's grace is there, then the impossible also becomes possible.

Valmiki and Vishwamitra sat in meditation for hundreds of years until anthills covered their bodies. But we get distracted if just a mosquito lands on the body! I am a product of the kaliyuga; for me, twenty-four hours is enough!

What is the akhara tradition of sannyasins?

In India, the sannyasins, swamis, or renunciates, have ten establishments, not just one. They are called *akharas*. The most powerful, important and popular akhara is called Niranjani. This is the establishment to which I belong. My guruji also belonged to Niranjani Akhara. This akhara has educated people: thinkers, writers, speakers, narrators, poets, musicians, academicians and intellectuals. Then there is another called Juna Akhara. The *nagababas*, naked sadhus, belong to this tradition. The heads of the akhara are elected every third year by a very large community of sadhus during the Kumbha Mela.

We have come to meet you, so could we have some time with you?

Meeting means to come together, staying means to reside, and talking means to converse. Now, you have not come to stay or to talk; you have come to meet, only for darshan. I wrote in my invitation letter, 'to spend a few moments'. I tell you a few moments, but I think the definition of your 'few moments' is a few days! You belong to some other planet!

Why must we experience sorrow?

Man must know sorrow; it is a learning experience for him. Sorrow makes you learn. If a loved one dies, then you feel unhappy. Nobody wants sorrow, everybody wants to be happy, but in happiness one loses self-control.

*Being intoxicated by wealth
Who does not become crooked?
And who is there whom power does not make deaf
To the sufferings of others?
Who is there whom the arrow
Of the fawn-eyed, beautiful lady does not pierce?
Who is there who does not suffer
From the high fever of achievements?
There is none whom arrogance and pride
Have left untouched.
Who is not driven mad by the fever of youth?
Whose reputation has not been tarnished
By worldly attachment?
Whom has envy not besmeared with spots?
Who is not moved by the blast of grief
And who is not bitten by the serpent of anxiety?
Who is the one who has escaped from illusion?
Desire is a worm and the body is like wood.
Is there any resolute man
Whose wooden body is not consumed
By the worms of desire?
And whose mind is not polluted
By the desire for progeny, wealth and fame?
All these are the family members of illusion
Which are formidable and countless.*

Prosperity, fame and power make a person weak. Therefore, when you are prosperous and powerful, you should lead a hard life. A man who is rich and powerful should not try to enjoy his riches and his power.

*God did not add fragrance to gold
Nor fruits to a sugarcane plant.*

*He also did not favour
Sandalwood with flowers.
Further, He did not make
A learned man rich,
Nor a king long living.
And metals could never have intelligence.*

When God gives us a lot, what is to be done with it? A man needs only some bread to eat and a small house to live in. God gives us prosperity so that we may give to others. He only makes us an agent. He gives us one million dollars and says, "Look here, you take your monthly salary and the rest you give to others." He makes us a trustee, a medium, an agent. If you were given twenty lakhs of rupees, what would you do with it? Eat it? Would you buy twenty lakhs worth of pulse, sweets, clothes? No, at the most, those needs can be met by one lakh of rupees. What would you do with the next nineteen lakhs?

God has given you that for others, but you forget. You think, "It is for me," but you are only the trustee of prosperity and power. You should use these gifts for others. You should also express kindness, sympathy and compassion for those whom you consider to be in the bracket of 'others'. You do not consider your son, wife, father or mother as one of the 'others'. Instead you say, "They are mine. My father, my mother, my wife, my child, my son, my daughter, all these are mine!" However, it is with those whom you do not consider as 'mine' that you should share your life. Only then will you have a glimpse of the higher being.

If your mind remains limited to what is 'mine', you will have a small brain capacity and very limited consciousness. Those who consider this is mine and that is yours, belong to the very lowest category of mind.

In the *Mahabharata*, it says:

*This is mine and that belongs to others;
Is the consideration of a mean-minded person.*

For one who has a large heart and consciousness, the entire humanity is one family, the whole world is a family, not

a community. So, whatever prosperity or power you enjoy, whatever compassion, love or kindness you have, share it with everyone. If you do not share, the powers that be will create trouble for you, the prosperity will become a sore on your foot and then you will not be able to walk. It has happened to many rich people and they are very unhappy. They cannot sleep without tranquillizers.

*On being turned on a lathe
The brightness of a jewel is enhanced.
A wounded but victorious soldier
Is also respected for his valour.
An elephant without tusk
And a river with less water in winter
Also deserve praise.
The moon with soft light
And the lady who is loved by her husband
Also have their place in the world.
Similarly, those who donate everything
Are praised by all.*

It has also been said:

*There are three channels for wealth;
They are gift, enjoyment and destruction.
Those who neither donate nor enjoy their wealth
Will surely find it destroyed.*

Therefore, it is said you should bear your sorrows alone and share your happiness with everybody. However, in reality, the opposite happens. People want to share their unhappiness, distribute it to others, and enjoy their happiness alone in private.

Do you receive phone calls from God?

Yes, I receive a phone call from God sometimes. I would like to call Him back, but I have not seen Him and I do not know His phone number. I am trying to find it, but I cannot. Nevertheless, He sometimes calls me. When I was in Trayambakeshwar, He called me and said, “Go to Rikhia.

It is a nice place for you.” So, that was faith in God and faith in God is more than enough. Then you do not have to pray for anything. Unless you are searching for God, you are not fulfilling the conditions of a sannyasin or of a grihastha. You have to have one mission in life: communication with God in some form. This applies to everyone, whether you are a householder, a sannyasin, a good or a bad man, a young or an old man, whatever you are.

The purpose of this communication with God is not for the meaningless fulfilment of your wishes or for the superficial type of bhakti. It is not for any reason. Love is only for love, that is all. Why do you love? You love for the sake of love. Similarly, bhakti is only for the sake of bhakti. Lord Krishna says in the *Bhagavad Gita* (12:6–7), “To those who worship Me, renouncing all actions in Me, regarding Me as the supreme goal, meditating on Me with single-minded yoga, to those whose mind is set on Me, O Arjuna, verily I become ere long their saviour from the ocean of samsara.”

Bhakti is not for begging God to marry off your daughters without much expenditure. That is like shooting a mosquito with an automatic rifle. To pray to God for the cure of your disease or for more money is treating God as a doctor, a cashier or a treasurer! This is meaningless. It has been said:

*Lovers of God
Are anxious, in vain,
About food and clothing.
Will the nourisher of the world
Not provide these things to his servants?*

I think that the best relationship which you can have with God is one of love. This is the first and foremost duty of a sannyasin, for which he has left his family, kith and kin, hearth and home. If he has forgotten this, only God can save him. I never forgot, not even for a day. I have been waiting for that day quite eagerly. There is a song of Rabi Babu:

*I am sitting here, waiting to be surrendered
Into the hands of love.*

*Therefore, much delay has been caused,
 And I have committed many offences too.
 They come to bind me with the string
 Of rules and regulations –
 But I escape somehow.
 If I must be punished for this offence,
 I will gladly accept it.
 For I am sitting here
 After being sold into the hands of love.
 People may speak ill of me.
 I bow down before all,
 Accepting the burden of blame.
 The day is about to end,
 Buyers and sellers have all gone.
 Those who came to call me
 Have also returned disappointed.
 I am left sitting here alone,
 For I have been sold
 Into the hands of love.*

I was waiting for the day when I would retire from my job
 and go straight to God. God is the first dharma of a sannyasi.
 Henceforth, no ashram should be established after my name.
 I will live here in solitude, and in bliss.

Kabir has said:

*A renunciate should live like this:
 He should always be indifferent to illusion.
 He should ever be immersed in the Lord's name.
 He should wear the garland of forgiveness,
 The line of ash on the forehead of virtue,
 And the small rosary of remembrance.
 He should wear the cap of fearless devotion on his head.
 He should have renounced the concept of time.
 His cover should be of true knowledge.
 His loin cloth should be liberation.
 A renunciate should have natural behaviour.
 The group of vices should be dropped,*

*And he should merge himself in the anahad nada.
The word should be his only support.
His alms should be of compassion.
Kabir says, the love of guru
Is everlasting and continuous.*

Satsang 12

November 22, 1994, Afternoon

Westerners have great discipline. If I say, “Do not touch my feet,” they will not. However, with Indian people, even if you tell them one hundred times, “Do not touch my feet,” they will still do it. I do not allow people to enter into this kutir. At first it was open; there was no bamboo barricade. My guru instructed me that after entering the state of paramahansa, I should not make disciples or become the guru of anybody. He said, “Neither allow others to touch your feet nor let yourself be worshipped.” The people of this area are used to the habit of touching feet and they did it to me the very first day. Therefore, I had a bamboo barrier put here, and only these other people are allowed to sit inside it, because what they have been told to do just once, they obey.

Do you ever experience anger?

While touring Europe, I often went to Casablanca from Barcelona. I remember arriving in Casablanca one evening. I was very angry, because Swami Satsangi had brought my bag, but she had left the key in Barcelona. I said to her, “I’ll throw you out of this place!” Anger was a part of my life from childhood. I was not a calm, quiet man. I only became quiet in 1964 or 1965. I was not only angry, I was very violent. I used to beat people, for nothing. Even today, in Rishikesh, they remember that I was a terror. Anger was one of the weakest points in my life. I did not like anyone to tell me what I should do. I would say, “Get out of here!” It was ego. My guru was just

the opposite, calm and quiet. If you abused or criticized him, he wouldn't even raise his eyes.

How about your disciple, Swami Niranjan?

What is there to say about Swami Niranjan? He is God's gift to me. God put him in my bag. He is just the reverse of me. He is not my carbon copy; he is my fulfilment, my completeness.

In 1982, at Puerto Rico, I asked Swami Niranjan to return to Munger. I had decided to retire, and there were times when I used to shut myself in. He said, "If you ask me to, I will come." Although personally he did not want to return, he had to come back. He has all the qualities which a sadhu should have to run an institution, and for that he has worked very hard.

A sannyasin has to live like a saint. A sage must have the qualities of endurance, forbearance, and should not be jealous, critical of others, afraid of anyone, complain or have big ambitions. These are the saintly qualities which are enumerated in the *Bhagavad Gita* (12:13–14): 'He who hates no creature, who is friendly and compassionate to all, who is free from attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, and forgiving, ever content, steady in meditation, self-controlled, possessed of firm conviction, with the mind and intellect dedicated to Me, My devotee is dear to Me.'

Swamiji, will you please come to Bhubaneshwar once?

Brother, *Ishwara* means Lord and *bhuvan* means globe. For me, Bhubaneshwar, the Lord of the whole world, is here itself. The place where I am sitting is my temple. These are my brinjal and my potatoes, my Rama and my Gopal. Wherever I am, I am within God's temple, and wherever I go, I go as a temple of God. He resides in me, but unfortunately I can not see Him, because I am only a temple. In this temple, there should be a poojari who will worship and see God. What is the difference? When you have come here from Bhubaneshwar, Bhubaneshwar has come here.

Now, I do not have any personal thought of leaving this place. Of course, I keep myself open, not to your request, but to the commands which I receive. If I receive a phone call from Him, well, I have no choice, but even then I'll say, "God, please let me remain here." I do not talk to Him; He talks to me. How can I talk to Him? I do not know how; I do not have the line of communication. He has it. I do not talk; I only pray. When I am talking to you and you are talking to me, there is communication. Many times in my life I have had clear cut instructions from Him, perhaps not when I wanted, but when He wanted it. I do not think that it is the language of my mind. I will not be foolish enough to attribute that direction to my mind, because nothing is subjective. It was from outside.

How can we see God's form?

How can you see God's form? Is God with form or is He without form? God has no particular form, but any form is His form. It depends on what the potter wants to make.

*O gentle one, different vessels made of clay,
Having different names, are in fact clay.
Their nomenclature is simply forms of speech
Changed for the sake of convenience.*

Earth has no form, but the potter makes many things out of it. All those are forms of earth. A goldsmith makes various ornaments from silver and gold. Are they the form of gold? No, gold has no form. Even the golden ornament which you wear is not the form of gold. It is gold, that is all. We attribute the name and form to it. In *Kathopanishad*, Yama says to Nachiketa, "God, residing in the chamber of the heart of this jivatma, is subtler than subtle and greater than great. Only rare sadhakas who are free from desire and anxiety can experience Him and that also only by His grace."

What form has cotton? A shirt, a cap, trousers, underwear or bedsheets? We give cotton a form. Similarly, we create a form or a mould and in that mould we see His form, because He is the smallest and He is the largest. The atman, subtler than the

subtlest and greater than the greatest, dwells in the heart of every living being. That supreme spirit is hidden in the cave of the heart of every living being. This is the pronouncement of the Upanishads: smallest of the small, as far as you can conceive what is small, and largest of the large.

This *atma*, the self, is inherent in the cave of this being. We call it the cave of the heart. In the Upanishads, they use the word ‘cave’, because it has a hollow inside. The *purusha*, the spirit, the *atma* or the effulgent self, is inherent in that cave. It is always there, just as the fragrance is inherent in the flower. Just as heat is inherent in fire, similarly, the spirit is inherent in you. A bhakta poet, Jayasi, has aptly remarked:

*Gain true knowledge and recognize Him.
As described in the Puranas:
He has no life, still he lives.
He has no hands, but does everything.
He has no tongue, but pronounces everything.
He has no body, but moves everywhere.
He has no ears, but hears everything.
He has no eyes, but sees everything.
How can He really be described?
He has no form.
And there is none to compare with Him.
There is no place without Him,
Though He is without a place.
His name is pure,
He is without any form or mark.
He is omnipresent in such a manner,
That He is neither possessed nor separate.
He is nearer to those who have a penetrating eye,
But far from those who are blinded by ignorance.*

So, which form should one see? Shiva is beautiful, in the sense that he is very attractive. He is a mad man, adorned with snakes and scorpions, who sits on a bull and smokes ganja. His body is besmeared with ashes and his hair is matted. Vidyapati has described the form of Shiva when he was going to marry Parvati:

*In this manner, my mad yogi
Proceeded for his marriage:
Clipping came the bull,
Clattering came the garland of skulls.
Lord Shiva was chewing pan voraciously,
Holding the damaru in his hand.*

*Maina, the mother of Parvati,
Erased the alpana and demolished the mandap.
And she broke the lamp with four beaks.
She took her daughter in her lap
And sat within the palace,
Forbidding the women to sing anymore.*

*Vidyapati says to Maina, listen, listen,
He is the Lord of the three worlds.*

Shiva's beauty is such that if you met him, you would go into a trance. His wife is so lovely and so glorious that everybody who looks at her says, "What a beauty!" In *Ramacharitamanas*, however, Tulsidas has said, "I am not going to describe the beauty of Parvati, because she is my mother." How can you describe the beauty of your mother? You can describe anyone else's beauty, but the beauty of one's mother is private.

*Then the munis called Uma.
Her friends brought Her fully decorated.
All the gods were charmed to see Her beauty.
Where is the poet in the whole world
Who can describe Her charming form?
All the gods bowed down to Her inwardly,
Knowing that, being the consort of Lord Shiva,
She is the Mother of the universe.
Parvati is the epitome of beauty,
She cannot be praised even by millions of mouths.
What to say of a feather-brained poet like Tulsidas?
Even the Vedas, Sheshnag and Saraswati
Feel shy to describe anything about Her.
At last, the fountainhead of beauty,*

*Mother Parvati, was brought to the mandap,
Where Lord Shiva had taken His seat.
Feeling shyness, She could not even look
At the lotus feet of Her husband.
Although the black bee, representing the mind,
Was already there enjoying the bliss.*

Tulsidas says that after their marriage, Shiva and Parvati came to Mount Kailash and they lived a very happy life. I can imagine how Shiva would have lived in his cave. I can imagine the sounds in the forest. Dense, dark and deep forests were all around my home, haunted by tigers, leopards, panthers, hyenas and big stags. However, if you cannot imagine it yourself, then the form of Sri Rama is also very beautiful.

To worship God with a form is very difficult. It is very nice to say that God is abstract, transcendental, formless, nameless, spaceless. You can believe it and you say, "Yes, it is right. I think it is like that." However, when you say that God has the form of Shiva, Vishnu or Brahma, it is very hard to believe. Children and those who have innocent hearts and minds can believe it. But intellectuals will say, "What? The son of a king? Krishna running after girls? He was married eight times! Has God got a wife? God's wife?"

It is hard to believe, like an innocent child, that God has a form. For the innocent, this path is the easiest, safest, surest, quickest and perhaps the best. For the intellect, it is the most difficult, because the mind which rationalizes does not accept it.

*Thinking thus, those detached persons,
Who know Him fully,
Repeat the name of Rama,
Abandoning all kinds of reason.
Therefore, considering this,
Abandoning all doubt and confusion,
Repeat the name of Rama,
Who is the ocean of compassion,
So beautiful and so pleasing.*

I used to have many problems in Rishikesh, because I believed that God is formless and nameless. Some of my gurus used to worship Krishna or Rama, and go to the temples to do long poojas. I used to say, "What are you doing? That is all nonsense!" At that time, I did not believe that God could have a form, and if anyone told me so, I said they were wrong.

Now, my whole concept has changed, because it is a personal experience. If I see a yellow rose, I know there is a yellow rose, and if you say, "No there cannot be a yellow rose, because I have never seen a yellow rose," I will say, "You may not have seen it, but I have." So, it is a matter of personal experience, *aparokshanubhuti*. I have had years and years of denying God with form. There was a time when I did not even believe that there could be rebirth. I said, "Karma is nonsense!"

However, all those views have changed now, not because I was defeated, but because I was convinced. I was not defeated in my intellectual convictions, I was convinced by my personal experience. When I was in Bihar School of Yoga, I always spoke about yoga and carefully avoided God. Most of you must remember this. But now, what can I do? I am not able to talk about yoga; I can only talk about bhakti. I can no longer talk about pranayama, mudra, bandha, vajroli or uddiyana. I have forgotten so many things. I have to ask Swami Satsangi, "What is that mudra called?" The yoga has all been erased.

Bhakti is love for God, the relationship with God, the form of God, the experience of God. Either my view is right or it is wrong. It cannot be both. If I am wrong, then I am schizophrenic, neurotic or psychotic. But, if I am right, then what am I? You must find out. I am speaking about this very frankly, although you may not understand it. The next generation is going to get scientific proof of bhakti, not religious evidence. What is said in *Ramayana* is all legendary evidence. It is not scientific. No religious book is scientific evidence. When you say that the moon is so many miles from the earth, there is scientific evidence provided today, through objective data and the means to prove it.

In the same way, the next century is going to see the renaissance of dharma and bhakti. If I am still alive, all your

children and grandchildren will love me! They will say, "Papa, do you know what bhakti is? In school we learned that a great scientist from America says that bhakti has a very important influence on biological matter, and that he has measured this with different instruments. So, you must love God like you love your wife or child." You will say, "This boy has gone crazy!" Then he will say, "I am not crazy; I am talking science. You people are all superstitious!" The time is going to come very soon for redefining bhakti as a part of our personal lives and as a method of redemption from pain.

Lumbago is not the only pain that man suffers from, neither is arthritis. It is true that pain is there, as is acidity or humidity, but there are many other problems in the human mind, consciousness and psyche. If you were to search for an individual cure for all of these problems, the whole life would be spent. However, there is a common cure for them all in bhakti. Therefore, you must practise kirtan, have satsang, and read the lives of great saints, whoever they may be: Mirabai, Ramakrishna, St. Francis, Aurobindo, St. Teresa of Avila or St. John of the Cross. Read the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, and just try to live like that. But do not make bhakti a religion or a sect.

This will take time to develop, because the intellectual mind is a very hard nut to crack. Therefore, a devotee should not take recourse in vain discussions. Aurobindo himself has said: "Reason was the helper, and reason is the barrier. Transcend reason." So, intellect was the helper, intellect is the barrier, transcend the intellect.

In *Narada Bhakti Sutras*, bhakti has been described as follows:

*That bhakti is indeed
The nature of supreme love
In the divine Self.
It is the embodiment of nectar.*

*Having attained that bhakti,
One becomes perfect,
Immortal and content.*

*Having attained that bhakti,
One desires nothing else,
Grieves not, hates not
And finding no delight in sensory pleasures,
Is not excited about the sense objects.*

*Having known that bhakti,
The devotee becomes
Intoxicated by bliss, quiet,
And delights in the Self alone.*

Satsang 13

November 23, 1994, Morning

What is the real purpose of religion?

Actually, religions are supposed to unite mankind, to bring peace. There should be no room for religious or ceremonial controversies and conflicts. Kabir has explained this point very beautifully:

*From where have come the two Gods
Who have deluded you like this?
You have named them Allah and Rama,
Karuna and Keshava, Hari and Hazarat.
If different ornaments are made of gold
Their essence is still one.
Although namaz and pooja are the same
As two words they sound different.
He is Mahadeva, He is Mohammed
And you might see Brahma in Adam.
Some are called Hindu, some are called Turks.
All should reside on the same earth.
Vedas are read by pundits,
And Kutaba is read by maulavis.
Kabir says, both are vessels of the same clay,
But they have forgotten the reality.*

The purpose of religion is to check the behaviour of society, to perform the traditional ceremonies at birth, marriage and death. Religion is a necessary institution and it cannot be the same everywhere. There cannot be one religion

for all societies. After all, in desert countries, where you have no trees, forests or water, religion teaches how to bury a dead body. In this part of the country, where there are plenty of forests and rivers, religion teaches how to burn a dead body and put the ashes in the river.

In desert countries there are actually two systems: one is burying the body, and the other is leaving it to the birds in the 'Tower of Silence', like the Parsees do. In this part of India, there are three systems: burying the body, immersing the body in water and burning the body. Burying the body is normally not allowed in the vedic religion. Only the body of either a great yogi or an infant, who has not yet eaten food, who is still living on mother's milk, and is pure, should be buried. An impure body should not be buried, because it contaminates the earth. So, religions give us these dictates.

Would you please tell us about some of your experiences during parivrajaka life?

There was a phase in my life, many years back, when I lived in villages. At that time I was very young and had not yet grown a moustache or beard. Two people were travelling with me. We went from Rajnandgaon towards the south, through the jungles. We went by the side of Nagpur, through very thick forests. We used to stay in the villages of tribals. There were no arrangements for anything and I used to walk from village to village. At night I used to make some food and keep a fire going, because the forest of that area is infested with tigers and other animals. I used to sleep underneath the trees. I went deep into the forest and studied the lifestyle of the adivasis there. I used to drink and dance on my own in the night.

I was a very ordinary man. I had not yet had a breakthrough in my life. I was just wandering and wandering, sometimes by car, or on foot and or on an elephant. I crossed over to Bangladesh and Burma on the back of an elephant. I went to Mandalay and Rangoon. I was very young and had a lot of strength. I remember those fine days, riding on big tuskers. I went to Afghanistan, through Baluchistan, Peshawar. In

Baluchistan, I had the darshan of Hinglaj, one of the *devipeethas*, like Kamakhya. There are sixty-four centres of Devi in India. Deoghar is one. It is the hridayapeetha, and is considered to be the cremation ground of Sati, consort of Lord Shiva.

When I was in Afghanistan, I used to live on grapes. For just four aanas, you could get such a lot of nice, sweet grapes. I can still remember the taste, *chaman ke angur*. I did not see the face of even one girl. The women did not come out. No girl was visible on the road. It was as if God had created a country or a city without women. How very dull, always seeing moustaches and beards, and never seeing delicacy, beauty and music!

What sort of sports do the children here play?

We have a cricket team. We are organizing a bat and wickets for them, because cricket is the one game which I always liked but I did not play. It is a game of calculation, chance and impossibilities. I have never played it because I had no time to humour myself. I had to work at my schooling and on my property. I was always a busy man and cricket needs the whole day. Test matches take five days. In those days there were no one-day matches. A match went on for three, four, five days. So, all right, if I did not play, let these children play.

These village people do not play tennis or badminton. Those are the games of the rich. The poor man's game is football. The game of middle class people and intellectuals is hockey. The game of yogis is cricket. The game of lazy people is golf. In golf you hit the ball here and remain standing there. You dress smartly, in proper coat and trousers. What kind of game is that, if you do not fall, if your clothes do not become dirty, if you do not get tired? What is the use of that game?

You must allow your children to devote as much time to sports as they devote to their studies. I do not know about Westerners, but Indians are making a mistake by always insisting on study. In the evening the mother will insist that the child sits and studies. It seldom happens today that the mother asks the children to go out and play. Is there any mother who tells

her children, "Why are you sitting here all the time reading books? Go and play."

There is too much study nowadays. Children have a great deal of nervous energy. Either they use it or there is excess voltage and the brain fuses, just like a bulb. Then the child becomes depressed. His mind goes topsy turvy and is disturbed. The body has the same kind of energy as you have in this electrical cable. The cable fuses at times, and in the same way the mind can also fuse. Games are extremely necessary to balance this energy. They are the number one necessity. Purification of the body takes place through sports. During play, the blood circulates through the body many times, and the more the blood circulates, the more it becomes purified.

If a child has a pure brain then study at school is enough. I do not think children should study at home. This homework business is not good. I do not think any child likes it. If you ask your children, "Do you like homework?" they will say, "No." We also know for a fact that many students who have lagged behind in their school studies went on to have brilliant careers. Isaac Newton, who discovered the law of gravity, was a very bad student, the dumbest in his class. He became the foremost scientist, and today the law of gravity is the basis of every scientific experiment.

If the child is a dull student, it does not mean that he will remain dull all his life. In my school days, I was very bad at mathematics, but ask me any calculation now and I can do it. I do not have to use a calculator. I never got good marks in mathematics. I did not even understand geometry. I do not know why they teach it. It has nothing to do with the brain, with intelligence, with tackling the problems of life, whether in business, family or institutional life.

You have to be able to tackle the problems of your life. If you cannot, then what is the use of being a first class student? There are many first class firsts, top ranking boys and girls, who have failed in the domestic environment. They fight, quarrel and get involved in conflicts. Their business is ruined, and they are not able to work. What then is the use of being a

first class first? It is good to have that rank. One gets a medal, one feels happy, but that is only a boost to the ego.

There are so many drugs now in the schools in Australia. The temptation is too great. How can this problem be avoided?

In India, you can get hashish and opium openly. I can purchase it now and smoke it in front of a police officer. I will not be arrested. But the day a law is made restricting its use, then problems will come. It has to be legalized. You see, the things which are not regulated or restricted do not have any attraction! I can get opium right now from the local market. I can smoke it even here, nobody cares. But if I were to do that in Australia, I would be arrested immediately. If they found that I had even a small amount of hashish on me, I would be arrested.

The mafia and similar groups compel the government to make such laws in order to hike up the prices and make it important. Only then can they do business. They are the people behind the enactment of the law. In America, mescaline is hard to get, because the American authorities have imposed restrictions. If the restrictions were removed, then nobody would care for it. In a few years, there will be ganja in the shops. When people know it is legal, they will stop using it. Anything which is readily available, which is not restricted, has no attraction for anyone.

In the village areas of India, when the child is born, the mother looks after him for the first few days, and then she goes back to her job in the fields as a labourer. She keeps the child at home. She makes a little solution of opium, puts it in the milk and the child sleeps the whole day. It is a very common practice here. So, when the child has had the drug from birth, let us say, all these drugs have no meaning for him at all. This is practised in the villages of India.

If a woman is pregnant should she take drugs?

No. The majority of Indian women do not smoke or drink. Drinking and smoking are not habits of women in India. There are a few exceptions but, by and large, Indian women

are a very disciplined lot. In tribal areas, the older ladies sometimes drink during festivals. When the older ladies have asthmatic problems, they smoke *hukka*. They take a hollow coconut, put some water in it and inhale tobacco smoke through it. They inhale only a little bit of nicotine to maintain the balance in the lungs. Otherwise, smoking and drinking is not the culture of Indian women at all. I do not think they will ever compromise or agree with it.

In the family, if the man drinks, a very big tussle goes on. The women will do anything to make the man get rid of that habit. They will fight throughout their whole life. They will not compromise and they will not serve wine, alcohol or drugs to their men. This is Indian culture. It is the culture of the people as a whole, whether Muslim, Christian or Hindu. Among the Parsees too, the tradition is the same. It is not due to women, it is the very culture of this place, and I hope it continues.

In India, most women are vegetarian, except in eastern India, which means Orissa, Bengal and Bihar, where the people like fish. Fish is considered to be a vegetarian item; it is referred to as a sea vegetable! Even the non-vegetarian women will not eat meat during Ekadashi, Kartik Poornima, the month of Shravan, or Navaratri. It is not that they are compelled to abstain, it is their spiritual training.

For most Indian women, the day begins with a bath and worship of tulsi. Since they do not have toilets at home, they go out of the village. Then they go to the water tank where they bathe and wash their clothes. After that, they pick flowers from the garden, go to the temple, do their pooja, come home and worship tulsi. Then they worship their *kula devata*, family deity, and sit down for breakfast. The women do all this early in the morning for an hour, then the day begins. Prior to that, the husbands have to do everything for themselves. They cannot say, "Get me my tea."

I am talking about illiterate women as well as educated women. We have many educated women, and they are very devoted to spiritual life. This is the influence which their children imbibe. If the child goes wrong, it is a problem for

the mother. Mothers in India cannot sustain this. It is a big blow to the mother because she thinks it is due to her sins. She feels it is her fault which is being projected in the child's life, because the child belongs to the mother. Socially and legally, he may belong to the father, but naturally he belongs to the mother. Children belong one hundred or ninety-nine percent to women and one percent to men.

Therefore, in India, they will never ask what is your father's language or which is your father's place. They will ask which is your mother's place. They will say mother land not father land and mother tongue not father tongue. We know that it is politics, the legal system, international and cultural influences, which have made Indian society patriarchal. We accept it, but the basis of Indian family life is matriarchal. Divorce in India is very difficult to obtain. Even if the husband and wife want to divorce each other, the law permits it, but society brainwashes them every day. Do not do this or such and such will happen. Ultimately, they get tired and say, "Okay, we will not divorce."

So, if you want your society to be free from drugs, then there are many loose ends to be tied up in relation to the family and social structure. Religion also plays a very important role.

Do you have any personal experience with drugs?

I used to drink as a child because my family came from Kumaon, which is a very cold region. Every night before sleeping, the children would be given a little bit of alcohol. Many years ago, I smoked so much ganja that I had a problem with my lungs, but I am not an addict. I took it because I thought it was necessary for spiritual life. Certainly, I believe that hashish, opium, LSD, or any chemical or narcotic can be useful at some point in spiritual life. Extracts from the hemp plant are used to treat schizophrenics and other mental patients. The same substance, when smoked by a healthy man, can turn him into a mental case.

We had a girl here who was undergoing deep depression. The doctor advised us to give her wine to drink. She used to go

to the bathroom and stay there for three hours, just sitting with her pants off. She would throw away all her clothes and stand in the bathroom. Somebody brought her here and I thought she could cook food for me. She was a problem instead of a help. However, she was a girl, and I couldn't just throw her out. So I thought, "Why not give her some wine?" After drinking wine for three months, she became normal.

She used to look after this place and cook all the food for the people here. She has even taken sannyasa. She used to be a very fashionable girl. Every day she would ask for different clothes. Then she herself went to Swami Niranjan and said, "I want to take sannyasa." Now, she has been sent to Munger for one month, because she has a great interest in asana and pranayama classes, and she understands them all. Let her life be auspicious. I will make her a sadhu.

We only see one aspect of drugs like opium, marijuana, LSD. We do not see the other side. We also do not try to know how they come into our lives. You can't reject them by restricting them. You can only reject them by accepting them. Whether it is ganja, alcohol or something else, it will not lose its attraction as long as you censure it.

Why is it that you live such an austere life?

For five years I have performed panchagni. Whatever was essential for that, I did. If my way of life does not appeal to you, what can I do? If you do not like the way I live, then please do not come. I am not interested in attracting people. If people do not come, I will be more than happy, because one implies purity and spotlessness; two implies trouble, *gadabad*; three implies complication, *latapat*; and four means finished, *chaupat*!

I do not communicate with anybody. It is an illusion of the mind. I have disconnected all my switches. I have not kept contact with anybody, either mentally or spiritually, since the day I came here. I came here on the orders of the Lord. I have relations with no one, either emotional, physical, mental, financial or political. I am a lone person. Nobody is my friend or my foe, nor is anybody my disciple or guru. I am concerned

with only one person and that is my soul, *atma*, *paramatma*. It is for Him that I am here.

If someone thinks that I have sent him a message, it is a figment of his imagination, a trick of his mind. Be assured of this. Do not feel hurt about what I am saying. Swami Satyananda has had the same attitude all his life. I have taken a puff from the chillum being passed around in every gathering and then slipped away. I am a slippery type of person. When I did not stick to my mother and father, how can I stick to you? I did not even acknowledge the one who brought me into existence. Sadhus and mahatmas are people of a different genre. Generally, they want to associate only with God, to establish their relationship with Him, to lay their wires in order to connect their hotline to His. For this reason, Kabir has said:

*There is none except You for me.
All the twenty-four hours
You are dwelling in my eyes,
Therefore, there is no space even for sleep.*

Now, what happens to you is that an illusion takes birth in your mind, and you think that Swamiji is sending you such and such a message. We do not send psychic transmissions. I am saying this clearly; I have told you and am telling everyone. Every individual has to experience the fruits of his karma.

*The karmas are never destroyed
Without bearing fruit.
Even after millions of years,
One is destined to reap the harvest
Of whatever has been sown, good or bad.*

As long as human emotion remains, man will keep creating memories and thoughts in his mind accordingly. He thinks that these thoughts come from God or that a goddess or devi is enquiring after him. However, to be such a person, one needs a very pure mind, the likes of which even I do not possess. That is why the first duty of man is to establish a relationship with the supreme being, to establish union

with God. That is the purpose of his birth. Everything else is secondary. So, why has man made everything else important and neglected this goal? The jiva which passes through eighty-four lakh yonis to obtain the human form has only that one aim: to attain God.

A man who casts off his body without attaining God, without devotion to God, without singing devotional songs in his praise, has to undergo the cycles of rebirth again. He has to come back again, because he leaves this life with an unfinished task. If you do not complete your household chores, you will have to come back again to finish the work. If you do not complete tilling the fields today, then you will have to come back again tomorrow. As long as your work is not completed, you will have to come back again and again. About this Tulsidas says:

*O mind, you will have to repent
If this opportunity is lost.
Having obtained a body which is difficult to get,
You should remember the feet of Hari
In your actions, speech and mind.
Kings like Sahasrabahu and Ravana
Could not save themselves from the power of time.
Nursing your ego, you collected wealth and affluence,
But in the long run, you pass away empty handed.
Knowing that sons, wives and others are all selfish,
You should not fall through affection for them.
In the long run they will all leave you,
O stupid one, why do you not leave them now?
O fool, now awaken the love of God,
And cast out disappointment from your mind.
Tulsidas says, the fire of sensuality
Is never extinguished by the ghee of sensory enjoyment.*

The funny part is that becoming a devotee of God does not cost anything at all. Nor does it take any time. Bhakti and love are internal matters. Does it take time to get angry? Does it take time to hate? These are attributes of maya, attachment, illusion, and jealousy. What else does one get from these

attributes but sorrow? Quarrels take place in the household due to jealousy. Why do you feel jealous of one another? For no reason at all. If jealousy were not there, there would be only bliss upon bliss. But man finds satisfaction in being jealous and gets strength from being in a disturbed state. An agitated mind gives great pleasure and man takes pride in his worries and hardship. He even gets a great deal of solace from depression, so he remains there.

*Just as it is folly to cook garlic
In a pot of emerald,
To use sandalwood as fuel,
To obtain roots of swallow wort
By ploughing a field
With a plough made of gold,
Or to have a barrier of camphor trees
To protect a field of kodo,
Similarly, that man is most unfortunate
Who, obtaining a human body
In this world of action,
Destroys himself with negative thinking.*

Since I have been here, I have tried to keep my black-board clean. I have tried to wipe off everything that has been written on it. I have made a resolution not to accept the letters and money orders that I receive every day. I send the letters on to Munger and return the money orders. What can I do with money orders? Where can I keep them? If I keep them in the bank, there will be an audit and I will have to call the income tax officer. Then I would have to create this fund or that fund. I do not want to do these things. It would be a case of falling from the frying pan into the fire. If Satyananda is to be followed, first of all, one has to wear a loin cloth and grow a beard, leaving the bank balance behind. Just as I have left that behind and come here, you have to leave behind all your comforts.

However, you can happily keep a dog, because there is great compatibility between the dog and the donkey. Guru is the donkey and the disciple is the dog. The nature of a dog

is similar to that of a disciple and the attributes of a guru resemble those of a donkey. A good guru is a good donkey and a good disciple is a good dog.

How can a dog be a disciple?

Bholenath is a one man dog. He does not care for anyone else. He will not even touch food cooked by someone else for him. If Swami Gyantara so much as touches the pressure cooker, Bholenath will not eat the food. So, I have to cook for him and wash his utensils. I have to do everything. A disciple is a one man dog. He does not flirt with one master then another. His attitude is, "Well, my destiny has given me this useless guru, so okay, I will die with him." He does not think, "No, he is useless, I must have a better one." Bholenath does not think like that. He says, "If my guru is useless, if my master is useless and does not love me, play with me, feed or respect me, then that is my destiny in this life. In my next life I will see what I get." That is how Bholenath thinks.

How can one find the suitable guru?

The disciple gets the guru he deserves. If a girl is dark, it is difficult to find a fair groom for her, unless her dowry is very large. When a girl is dark, it becomes necessary to search for a groom who is also dark. Therefore, the guru is like the disciple. If the guru is good, so much the better. It does not mean that you can say, "My guru is not good, so let me leave him and find another." In Rajasthan, there is a great guru who awakens kundalini. I have heard that he performs shaktipat. But Bholenath is not tempted. He does not think that because meat is cooked well in that house, or because one gets good salad, he will go there. Bholenath says, "Whatever he gives me here will do, because I have this guru for this entire lifetime."

Live according to the principles that apply between a disciple and guru, a husband and wife, a devotee and God. These are ideal rules. There will continue to be both sorrow and happiness. If your husband is bad, what can you do? It is your fate. Try to reform him. If you leave your house

and go away, the next one will be just the same. Fate will not leave you. I have seen this with my own eyes. That is why a man must always live according to the prevailing rules and principles. A one man wife, a one man dog, a one guru disciple, these are the strong deterrents against default in an ideal society. In this light, Bhartrihari has said:

*One should worship only one god,
Be it Sri Krishna or Lord Shiva.
One should have friendship
With only one,
Either king or renunciate.
There should be
Only one dwelling place,
Either in a city or in a jungle.
And for entertainment one should have
Either a beautiful woman or
The lonely cave of a mountain.*

The defaults may not be realities, they may not even happen, but social deterrents are stronger. In every society there have to be ideals and there have to be deterrents. Having an atom bomb in your country is a deterrent and is not necessarily for attacking anyone. Our rishis and munis knew very well how complex life is and how things happen in society, what happens between guru and disciple, and between husband and wife. They knew the realities, so they thought that without a deterrent principle, everything would become chaotic, and that people would become indisciplined and act according to their whims and fancies.

Many years ago, when Swami Sivananda was alive, the Paramarth Niketan Ashram was on the other side of the Ganga. A very big meeting was to be held of the Bharat Sadhu Samaj, which was founded by Gulzari Lal Nanda. Swami Sivananda was supposed to address it and, as he spoke in English, my job was to translate his speech into Hindi. Afterwards, all the mahants and mandaleshwars said to me, "You are such a great chap, what are you doing here?" They put great pressure on me to join the Bharat Sadhu Samaj, but

I was quick to understand and said, “They are trying to bait me like a fish. Why should I join them? Swami Sivananda is my guruji and he is great. I have not left my home to become a secretary, a president or a member of any samaj. I have come here because I wanted a guru.”

How did you find your guru?

I had been searching for a guru because my previous teacher, a tantric lady, had told me that I would need a guru if I wanted to again have the experiences that she had given me. I asked, “Where do I find a guru?” and she replied, “Well, if you are a disciple, you can always find a guru. A dog can always find a bone.” So I set off and reached my guru. I got the right master. I was a very angry young man; he was calm. I was very foolish; he was enlightened. I was very impatient; he was patient. I used to lie; he never lied. I had no mercy or compassion; he had nothing but mercy and compassion. I was very miserly; he was very generous. You must find a guru who can be your complement. A devotee has sung this devotional song about guru:

*I can abandon Rama, but not the guru.
I do not consider Hari equal to the guru.
Hari has given me birth in this world,
But the guru has set me free
From the cycle of birth and death.
Hari had sent five thieves to me,
The guru has freed this desolate man from their clutches.
Hari had entangled me in the net of family,
The guru has cut the fetters of attachment.
Hari had involved me in disease and sense enjoyments.
The guru has untangled me by making me a yogi.
Hari had led me into karma and bondage,
The guru has shown me the form of self.
Hari brought liberation and freedom,
But the guru effaced all illusion.
I dedicate my body and mind to my guru.
I can abandon Hari, but I will never abandon my guru.*

It took me so many years to emulate my guru and practise his principles. He used to say, "Serve, love, give. Whatever you have, give it to others. It does not belong to you." I never understood him then, but now I do. Nothing belongs to me, nothing is mine. I am just a medium. Here it comes, there it goes. Even if this mat is given to me, it is not for me, it is for somebody else. On every grain is written the name of the person who will eat it. On this bicycle is written the name of the receiver. Every cow that will be donated has the receiver's name written on it. Swami Satyananda is a post office!

Now, the teaching of this guru is that for the generous man, the entire world is a family. This is mine, this is not mine; such are the thoughts of a limited mind. This concept of mine and thine is a very low and mean one. For those who have a generous and liberal character, the whole world, irrespective of religion, caste and need, is their family. With improved communication, this concept has now become a reality. The barriers of distance are gone. Once I travelled from London to New York by Concorde, which flies faster than sound. I had my breakfast in London and when I reached New York, it was not yet breakfast time. So, the definition of neighbour needs to be changed.

Can we bridge the gap between spirituality and science?

God will be the subject of the next century. Matter was the subject of scientists in this century. Recently, many of their discoveries have been causing negative reactions in society and also between nations. So, now it is necessary to speak about God, and it does not matter whether it is done in a Jewish, Christian, Muslim or Hindu way. Something transcendental has to come as a focus for the mind. In the last part of this century, God was not something to be talked about, but now you can talk about Him. God has to be brought forth very systematically and scientifically, not as someone mysterious. I never spoke about God before in my life, but suddenly I am not able to speak of anything else.

Discover your relationship with God, whether He is your father, your mother your son, your dear friend or your

soul. Work at it, and try to be in tune with God. If you love someone, you do not have to leave your job. If a boy and girl fall in love, they do not stop eating or going to the office. It is a matter of awareness. They are both deeply immersed in each other's awareness. Whatever they do, they feel very pleasant, very unified and life becomes different for them.

If God becomes a matter for science and the scientists start doing their experiments, then will the attitude of people change?

We will see what happens in the next century. It is not very clear yet what the experiment will be. They will have to discover the principles of sadhana.

How has tapasya affected your health?

I am as fit as a fiddle! Health is no problem for me, although I have always spoken about health. I talk about constipation as if I have had it throughout my life! God is very great in every respect. He has sent me very special blessings.

Would you please tell us about how Bihar Yoga Bharati will function?

Bihar School of Yoga will become a constituent school of Bihar Yoga Bharati. There will be four faculties in the university. At first, the medium of instruction will be English, but eventually, as the need arises, the number of faculties will increase, and so will the medium of instruction, to include other important languages that are spoken worldwide. In order to provide a high standard of teaching, the university can invite the best professors to come and share their knowledge for a semester. The university can have its own printing press and produce the best books. There are many talented teachers all over the world. Yoga is not a subject which only we know. Other people can interpret yoga in a very systematic, scientific and progressive way. They can relate it to psychology, philosophy and medical science. Very great people exist in the world.

What is the use of producing low quality books, low quality teachers, low quality students and a low quality lifestyle? Yoga

is a royal science, *raja yoga*. It has to be lived regally. A yogi may live like a fakir, but that is another matter. It has been said in the *Bhagavad Gita*, 'Brahmajnana is a sovereign science, a sovereign search, the supreme purifier, directly realizable in accordance with dharma, very easy to perform and immortal.'

Swami Niranjan has thought very well. In fact, it was my guruji, Swami Sivananda's idea, not mine. Swami Sivananda thought of a university many years ago. He even named it the Yoga Vedanta Forest University, but somehow it did not materialize. From the day the Bihar Yoga Bharati was pledged, it has received tremendous support and the goodwill of the people. I am sure that it will usher in a new and very valuable dimension to the concept of universities and education.

Will you appear at the university yourself?

No. Swami Niranjan is there at present. I prefer to stay here. Society, friendship and love are past chapters of my experience. They are the text of the book. Now, I am up to the epilogue. I am even thinking of working out a plan for doing a bit of work on that nearby hillock. It is a good mountain and I would like to go and stay there alone in a cave for as long as I live. That is being in total harmony with nature.

*I am a wandering yogi.
I have nothing to do with the world.
This body is made of bone and flesh,
And covered with skin on the outside.
Still, O Rama, people are enchanted to see me.
In this world are riches and treasures,
Gardens, orchards and beautiful buildings.
They will all be left in a moment,
Not even a farthing will go with you.
Mother, father, brother, dear friend,
Wife as well as son,
Are all cast in a drama of selfishness.
There is no peace among them.
Day by day and moment by moment,
The whole body is decaying fast.*

*Brahmananda says: by remembering the Lord,
One feels much more comfortable.*

I do not understand the concept of yoga ecology. Would you please define it?

You do not have to understand it technically. How did Vashishta, Vishwamitra and all the other saints and sages live? What kind of dwellings did they have? How many students and ashram inmates did they have? How did they manage such big institutions? If you have read ancient books, then you will understand. For example, there is a story in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. Janaka was the king of Videha. He was the ruler of Mithila and the father of Sita. Many great scholars used to sit in his court. One day he announced, “He who considers himself the most intelligent scholar may take away these ten thousand cows.” Ten thousand cows! Yajnavalkya got up and asked his disciple, Somashrava, to drive all the cows home.

That is how the story begins, there is much more after that. I am only talking in terms of ecology. Ecology does not just mean forests, gardens or parks. You need to have ample pastures for your animals. Yajnavalkya had enough pastures for ten thousand cows. Here, there is not even enough pasture for one hundred cows! Near the pastures, factories have been built. People must have the guts to oppose these things, but they do not, because we are getting materialistic. If I open a factory here, I will earn money and you will earn money. Everything is being done now for the sake of materialism, and money is a part of that. What we are doing now is aimed at *artha* and *kama*, not *dharma* and *moksha*. *Artha* means prosperity and money, *kama* means fulfilment of desires and passions, *dharma* means higher duty, and *moksha* means freedom. You all know this very well.

In yoga ecology, you have to remember that the purity of the atmosphere depends on the fulfilment of the needs of animals and men, so that they can live in peace. It is not necessary to have a computer or a camera, but it is very necessary to have pure air, pure water and pure surroundings. How do you

compare this place with yours in Mumbai? Here you get fresh air, but you may not get a taxi or a motor car. You may not have good roads, a fax or a satellite telephone. But are those things necessary for survival? For a good life, for good health, for a good mind, what is necessary?

Therefore, when we say ecology, we are talking in terms of yoga. When you practise yoga or live the life of a yogi, you must have a certain type of surroundings. You may have ten, twenty or fifty parks in Mumbai, but that does not serve the purpose because a cow cannot graze there. You must have enough space for cows, bullocks, donkeys, horses and goats to graze and for chickens to fly. I do not mind if you eat meat, but at least the animals that you eat must have pure flesh, so that the meat you eat is clean. Meat in itself is impure, so you do not want to make it more impure.

Was there a connection between Greece and India in ancient times?

Yes, definitely. My programs in Greece were always the finest, because India and Greece have had an historical relationship since the time of Chandragupta Maurya. In Greek, they call him Chandra Cetus. His wife was from Greece, which is known as Unan in Hindi. Ashoka the Great, who invaded Kalinga, was half Indian and half Greek. He was one of the greatest emperors of India, despite what he did to Kalinga. Alexander the Great came to India from Greece with many great scholars and philosophers. Here, in Vikramshila and Takshashila, he encountered many sadhus, especially Jains, because Jainism was at its peak when Alexander was in India.

The Jain and Greek hermits had almost the same character and way of life. So, the Greek hermits had many discussions with the Jain saints. Philosophically, Jainism does not believe in the existence of God. Strictly speaking, they believe in the evolution of matter to the state of *arahant*, enlightenment. In vedanta, everything is defined; it is like this and like that. In Jainism, it is not so; it is maybe like this and maybe like that. So, Jainism gave us the doctrine of probability, *Syad Vad*. Those who know philosophy know *Syad Vad*.

Alexander was greatly impressed by a Jain sannyasin called Kalyana Muni. He requested that Muni follow him to Greece (Unan) and he agreed. Kalyana Muni is known in Greek documents as Kolinos. But Alexander died on the way and did not reach Unan. Some say that his soldiers revolted and killed him. The story is that Kalyana Muni finally settled in Babylonia and established his ashram there. In Bihar, you will find many people with Greek features, such as broad and protruding eyes. You can also find a few in the border areas of Bengal.

In the Greek language, the word yoga is written as 'yonga'. It is a very difficult language. They have translated many of my books into Greek and more are being translated every year. A very capable swami is in charge of the ashram in Greece. It is in a village called Paiania. It is far away from the town and social events. They purchased land and grew vegetables. Of course, there were obstacles too; it was not all smooth sailing. But I took it as a challenge, because whenever you want to do some good work, you must always accept challenges. If the road is smooth, where is the challenge? Anybody can drive on a smooth road.

The Greeks are very simple, loving people and great bhaktas. Touching the feet is one thing, but they kiss the feet and even your clothes. In many ways they are like Indians, but the Indians only touch the feet, while the Greeks kiss them with their lips! The Greek men and women are the epitome of beauty. Athens is the capital of Greece. The meaning of Athena is the same as Saraswati, the goddess of learning. Similarly, the capital of Spain is Madrid, which means mother, in honour of the mother of Christ.

Greek people are also religious, but as their country has progressed immensely in science, the scientists are atheists. They believe that matter is the truth and, as the soul cannot be seen, it is not possible that it exists. Matter is tangible, therefore, it is real. The soul cannot be seen, smelt, touched or felt, therefore it does not exist. That is the philosophy of *charvaka*, to believe only in the existence of the four tattwas. Nevertheless, the Greek people are very emotional, devotional and loving.

Actually, almost all Westerners love kirtan, japa and meditation. Whenever I visited the West, particularly Australia and Greece, we would have kirtan for hours! It is really true that in this kaliyuga, doing kirtan to God will give you everything. Tulsidas has written very nicely in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*In kaliyuga, people sound
The depth of the world ocean
Only by singing in praise of Hari.
In kaliyuga, neither yoga nor yajna
Nor true knowledge avails.
There is only one support
Just sing the name of Rama.*

*Those who, repeating the name of Rama,
Renounce all other hopes,
And chant His praise with devotion,
Cross the world ocean without doubt.*

*The glory of name sanctifies kaliyuga,
For virtues are counted, not faults.
No age compares with kaliyuga,
Provided one has faith.*

*By devotedly counting
The impeccable virtues of Rama,
One crosses the world ocean.*

What sort of work do village people do here?

There is a lot of agricultural work to do here, but the people do not have the means to do it. The swamis take the tractor and plough their land. This is the first year that they have done this. So far, they have ploughed more than one hundred acres, and the people all around my place are very happy. It is important that your neighbours should be as happy as you are. Someone from Dhanbad brought the tractor and left it at the gate. I do not know who gives what; people just leave things here.

This year, in the land behind these walls, we are going to make a big reservoir, using the underground water

resource. We will draw the water with the help of pumps, connect it with sprinkler systems, through aluminium pipes with hooks, and take it two to three kilometres from here, or as far as possible. The well will be dug deep. It will have an underground water source, so the village people have a perennial water source.

How can I leave my family and come to ashram life?

First of all, you should live in the ashram for a short period of three to six months, then return home. If six months is not possible, then stay off and on for one or two weeks or for one, two or three months. In this way, your family will get used to your absence. You will also understand whether you can manage the new way of life. You have to live both in the ashram and at home, so that you do not cause suffering, and can stabilize yourself in the new surroundings. Finally, you need to stay in the ashram for the longest possible duration and leave your old life. But at first, gradually increase the frequency of your visits.

The problem is I cannot stay without my husband.

Then stay with him, because in the ashram you cannot have the pleasure of a husband. If you live in the family with your husband, you can have a spiritual life too, but in the ashram you cannot have the pleasure of being with your husband. If it is pleasant to live with him, then the decision is yours.

What are some of the different dimensions of spiritual life?

Millions of people in this country, and maybe in other parts of the world too, think that one should not live only for one's pleasure. Sometimes life is unpleasant, but it may be pleasant for somebody else at my cost. If I can help somebody, give him some comfort or facility, even if it causes me a little bit of unpleasantness, I think it is a worthwhile sacrifice. This in itself is spiritual life, because spiritual life has to be understood in all its dimensions. Detachment is the austere dimension of spiritual life, but there are other dimensions. You can enter my Lord's home from any door. There are many doors like

austerity, detachment, renunciation, devotion and purity. It says in the Bible that there are many doors leading to the house of my Father.

Unpleasantness in life is my shadow. Wherever I go, it will follow me. Just suppose that we are living together and you are the cause of my unpleasantness today. If I leave you and go away, I may have left you, but the unpleasantness, which is my destiny, will follow me. Unpleasantness is man's inevitable destiny. There are very few people in the world who can be happy after coming out of an unpleasant situation in life. Generally they go into another situation, taking the unpleasantness with them. Bhartrihari has aptly said:

*If flowers do not decorate the thorny plants of kareel,
Is the season of spring to blame?
If nothing is visible to the owl in the daytime,
Is the burning sun responsible?
If raindrops do not fall in the month of the chatak bird
Are the clouds to be blamed?
None is competent to erase
The effects of our karmas of previous lives.*

My guru used to say, "If a crow goes to a place of pilgrimage, even there people will throw stones at it for disturbing the peace. But everybody will want to be where a cuckoo is singing." The cuckoo is always loved wherever she goes, because that is her nature. The crow is always detested, because that is his nature. Man has to change his nature, his personality and his way of thinking. His first priority should be to live for others, not just for himself. One has to be aware of others. The soul must go out; the spirit must expand. There should be no unpleasantness between husbands, sons, fathers and friends. Man's nature has to change. I think it is man's nature which causes unpleasantness. Situations are the same everywhere, in every family, between every husband and wife.

Every musical instrument has seven notes, and each one is different. Similarly, in the family, the husband and wife have different opinions, and the wife has different opinions to her children. How can harmonious music be made from all these

different opinions? The musical instruments can be different, but the raaga must be one. Sometimes when people sing these seven notes together, there is discord in the harmony. Similarly, if you do not know how to play the instrument, you will create horror, not music! But if you know how to play, you will create harmony, joy, elation and enjoyment. People will begin to dance. Where was that harmony when discord was being created? It was there, but you did not know how to play it. Harmony is not ingrained in the notes, it has to be created. I think this applies to everybody.

Satsang 14

November 23, 1994, Afternoon

The ashram is so pleasant and relaxing. Why don't we find more time to spend there?

Ashram life is always rejuvenating. When you are tired after travelling in the hot sun, it feels so good to come to a waterfall or a shady tree. But is that possible all the time? What is the definition of relaxation? What is the definition of rest? What is the definition of peace? There is no absolute definition; it is relative. You feel good when you come to the shade of the tree after walking for ten kilometres in the hot sun. But this feeling is related to your travel. If you were to live there, under the shade of the tree all the time, you would feel inconvenience.

Would you explain how awakening of kundalini takes place through transmission of energy to the subtle body?

You are asking me about a subject which I do not even think about any more. For me, yoga is a vague memory of the past. Transmission, subtle body, esoteric body, awakening of kundalini; I do not understand all that anymore. The only subject I can understand now is devotion and love. I am not able to speak on your subject, because I have gone very far away from Patanjali's raja yoga, from kundalini yoga, even from the books which I have written. I think that I have graduated.

Now, I always think about how to develop more and more devotion. What is the best form of relationship with God? Am I His beloved? Am I His lover and is He my beloved?

What is my relationship with God? How can you love God with the same intensity with which you would love a beautiful young woman? When the mind of man is involved with a beautiful girl or woman, he is not aware of anything else. That is *parabhakti*. Parabhakti and jnana are one. There is no difference between them. You will also agree that all the saints from the beginning of creation have spoken on this point. The Sufis called it *ishk hakiki*, Christ called it divine love, Buddha called it *karuna*, Mahavir called it *ahimsa*. Chaitanya, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and many others, including Kabir, Nanak, Surdas and Tulsidas, all said the same thing. This is something which everybody has to think about. Surdas has written:

*As a woman is dear to a lustful man
 So most of life is lost in sense enjoyment.
 The hairs of the head have gone grey,
 The eyes are becoming dim,
 The ears have lost their power to hear,
 And the feet have also grown weary.
 We drink water from a well,
 Abjuring the pure water of Ganga,
 And worship Satan in place of Hari.
 If a man remembers Lord Krishna,
 He can obtain artha, kama, dharma and moksha.
 Why do you roam here and there,
 Abandoning such a generous Lord?
 Why not become careful, O careless man?
 You are caught by the world
 As the moon is caught and eclipsed by Ketu.
 You cannot be free
 Without chanting the name of Rama.
 Surdas says you have to spend nothing
 In singing the name of Rama.*

How much of your mind is engrossed in materialistic things, in your children, in your future, in your business? I do not have to say that almost ninety-nine percent of the capacities of your mind are directed towards kama and not Rama. I am not asking

you to redirect ninety-nine percent of your mind to Rama, but certainly it should be half and half, fifty-fifty. Do you think God has no share in your life? Is maya the only shareholder in your life, not God? The truth is that God has the total share. Maya is somewhere on the fringe.

In the last few years before I left Munger, I found it very difficult to deal with yoga. My mind was not interested. This was not because there isn't anything in yoga; there is, certainly. A boy studying in tenth grade has to read all the text books related to that class; they are the reality for him. I am not saying that yoga is irrelevant, not at all. It has a relevance in man's day-to-day life. It may not be relevant to me, but it is very relevant to you.

Formerly, my understanding of yoga was through intellect, or buddhi. I had knowledge of it, but it was not possible for me to put it into practice. I could not apply it, because my guru had said, "You have to work out your karma and wait." So I did as he commanded. Now, my only wish is that, when my prana leaves the body, I may have the name of Govinda, on my lips. While I live, let me remember Thy name and when I am dying, let the last breath of my life be Thy name.

*O Govinda, this is my prayer.
Not to forget your name for a moment.
Let me chant these names night and day,
Govinda, Damodar and Madhava.
This is my last wish,
That at the time of death
You should be before me,
Playing your flute
And pleasing my mind.
Let me leave my body,
While chanting these names,
Govinda, Damodar and Madhava.*

There is something called the last breath. What should a man's thought be at the time of the last breath? Everybody has a last thought. You may not be aware of your first thought, because you were not totally conscious at that time, but there

is certainly a last thought and a last breath. There is certainly a last action also, such as drinking water, doing japa, going to the toilet, talking to somebody. What should my last act, my last thought and my last breath be? Why, it should be God's name, because that thought determines our onward journey. Tulsidas has written:

*Birth after birth the munis keep trying;
Still the name of Rama
Does not come from their mouths
At the time of death.*

You know the story of Laila Majnu. If you do not know the story, please study it. This is the story of two lovers. Her name was Laila; his name was Majnu. They loved each other very much. It is a very great love story. You can interpret it in the form of divine love, *ishk hakiki* or ordinary love, *ishk mizazi*. They were constantly aware of each other. Is the same love for God not possible? It is difficult. *Atma rati*, relation with the self, is difficult. Why is it difficult? That is an important question. We have so many centres of distraction, attraction, diversion. A man who loves ten women cannot love one woman. A woman who loves ten men cannot love one man.

Atma rati is difficult because there are so many diversions in the channel of love. You can see that the sun's rays are normally spread out. However, if you use a magnifying glass to focus the rays here at one point, the grass will start burning. So, the mind has to be concentrated, one-pointed, like the sun's rays in the magnifying glass. When you collect all the energy in one channel, you can run the generator and produce electricity.

A mahatma has said that man has divided his love in many directions. Therefore, he is not able to love God with intensity. Every morning and evening, out of fear, he does arati and other obligatory rituals. He is afraid that he will be punished if he does not worship God. But God does not care whether you worship Him or not. Those people who can understand this, who have bhakti in their hearts and minds, are very rich and very fortunate. Mirabai has said in one of her songs:

*O, I have found the gem of the name of Rama.
 My gracious guru has given me a priceless gift.
 He owns me through showering his endless kindness.
 I have obtained the principal amount
 Cherished during all my lives,
 Whereas others have lost theirs in this world.
 It can never be exhausted or taken by thieves,
 It goes on increasing day by day.
 In the boat of truth,
 With the holy guru as the boatman,
 I have crossed the ocean of this world.
 The Lord of Mira is the only Giridhara,
 And she chants His name most happily.*

Mirabai left the kingdom of Chittor behind and became a beggar. So what? She is still reigning over the hearts of millions of people. Today, she is still remembered in every home. Would you remember Mirabai if she had merely remained the queen of Chittor? In devotion to God, the bhakta is willing to do anything if it leads him closer to God. It has been said by a devotee that:

*I am interested only in Rama.
 Let the world be displeased if it likes.
 If the family, sons, wife,
 And ethics of the world are being lost
 Due to remembrance of the Lord,
 Let them be lost.
 Sitting in the company of saints
 Let me do good for myself.
 If people are interested in sense enjoyments,
 Let them enjoy as they please.*

Once the devotee begins to experience the real devotion, his only concern is with Ishwara. Even if the whole world is against him, he is not bothered in the least, because the all-encompassing love of God is such that it engulfs the body, mind and entire being of man. The ultimate of bhakti is union, when the jivatma and paramatma become one.

*On knowing You, one becomes You.
On gaining the knowledge of Brahman,
One becomes Brahman.*

In *Ramacharitamanas*, Valmiki says to Rama:

*Only he whom You favour knows You,
And he becomes You by knowing You.
O Rama, the devotees know You only by Your grace,
And You are like scented sandalwood
To their tender heart.*

What is the difference between the Alakh Bara and the ashram? Are they not the same?

There is a beautiful story about a guru, who had a disciple like me. The guru went on a pilgrimage. He left his little kutir and told the disciple to take care of it until he returned. One day, a rat came and destroyed the disciple's langoti. The next day the rat came back for another langoti, and this he did almost every night. The people around the disciple said, "Maharaj it is very difficult to manage this rat. Why don't you keep a cat?" So, he kept a cat. Now, in order to feed the cat, he had to go begging for milk every morning. Somebody said, "Swamiji, it must be difficult for you, why don't you keep a cow?" So, by the time the guru returned, there was a full-fledged ashram.

When I came here from Munger, I decided this would not be a residential ashram. I did not want to jump from the frying pan into the fire. For this month, Swami Niranjan wanted to get five hundred tents from NCC and make a tent city here. That is his way of thinking. I said, "No, this would no longer be the kutir of Swami Satyananda. It would become a big institution, and I do not want that." Therefore, don't mind that you can't get anything here. Bring your bread and butter or whatever, and after nine o'clock you can have some lunch here. At twelve o'clock attend the satsang, and by two o'clock go back to your hotel or motel.

Why did you decide to call us this year?

This year I thought it was necessary. This year is the fifth and final year of panchagni. I had made a sankalpa to do panchagni for five years. Panchagni is now complete and resting. Now, the fire is internal.

Swamiji, you have told us that you do not have God's number, but God has your number. He calls you and gives directions. Is it possible that we can't call God, but that God has got our number and He can call us whenever He wants?

Please remember that whatever I am telling you here is only for your entertainment, *prajaa ranjan maatram*. I am not giving you *upadesh*, guidance. I am only amusing you. I am not advising anyone, nor have I any intentions of guiding anyone spiritually. That phase of my life is over. I invited you here and I am happy to see you. Because you are here for one or two hours, I am talking about some nice things to entertain you.

The *Viveka Chudamani* (57–58) says:

*Speaking high sounding words,
Delivering lectures extempore,
And explaining scriptures brilliantly;
These things can please the scholars,
But they are all for worldly happiness
And not useful for liberation.*

Please find the way out for yourself. Do not expect me to help anyone. I am not even thinking. I have disconnected all the telephone lines.

Swamiji, please show us the way.

How will you find it when you are searching externally? The way is within you. The way is in your soul. You are the destination, you are the journey and you are the passenger.

*The traveller is moving somewhere,
The path is somewhere else,
The guide is far away –*

*Can any journey be successful
In such conditions?*

Whatever you are searching for, search within yourself, or else ask some experienced and knowledgeable person. I am now out of that profession. One cannot do two things at the same time. There cannot be two swords in one scabbard. One cannot be a sevak and a guru at the same time.

My vritti is that of a sevak. I have sevak vritti, kinkar vritti, not sadhaka vritti. I am the servant of the servant of the servant of Narayana. Tulsidas also believed in the master-servant relationship:

*Tulsi says that if the word 'Rama'
Comes from a person's mouth, even by chance,
Tulsi is ready to offer the skin of his body
To prepare shoes for that man.*

It has also been said in *Brahmavaivartta Purana*, 'Devotion and service to Lord Krishna are superior to even the best boons of the world. Such devotion is superior to the five kinds of liberation: saroopya, samipya, salokya, sarshti and sayujya.'

I will sit where You want me to sit. I will eat whatever You give me. You sent me to Munger, I went. You told me to leave Munger, I left. You told me to stay in Rikhia. Well, I am here. If You tell me tomorrow to leave Rikhia, I will go. I will not think where and how will an old man like me go. A servant has no choice. The sadhana that I am doing and the life that I am leading is not of my choice. It is certainly a good life by any standards. I am healthy, happy, peaceful, alone, with no worries, no anxieties.

*I fill the cup of intoxication
At this party.
I do the job of drinking
And serving His wine.
As He has stirred the instrument
Of my heart,
So do I play only His tune.*

This is not my choice; it is His choice. What the servant does is not the choice of the servant; it has to be the choice of the master. That is known as *seva*. I am doing whatever I have been instructed to do, and not just anything that comes into my head. Prahlad says in *Srimad Bhagavata*:

*O my Lord, one who expects fulfilment
Of his desire with Your blessings
Is not a servant but a businessman.
One who is interested in fulfilling his desires
By serving the master is not a servant.
One who fulfils his desires
Through the services of others
Is not a master at all.
O Lord, I am Your servant without interest,
And You are my master without expectation.
My relationship with You is not comparable
To that between a king and his servant,
Who have expectations of each other.*

I was comfortably established in Munger. I did what He ordered and will do so in the future, according to His wish. Therefore, a servant has no choice.

*May I never forget this feeling
That I am the servant and Rama my master.*

Three years ago, when I had completed my purashcharana of one hundred and eight lakh (108,000,00) mantras, I received an instruction, an order, “Love thy neighbours as I love you. Provide them with the same facilities that I have provided for you.” That is all. I spoke to Swami Niranjana, Swami Vedananda and Swami Satsangi. They said, “That is a very good idea.” I have a small kutir. That is the facility my God has provided me with. I will provide others with the same facility, because He has ordered it.

It is going to happen. I do not even worry about how it will happen. I do not worry about money; I do not even think about it. I have never had to think about money in my life. Fish never think about water. Do fish get thirsty? Lakshmi is

my mother and she has told me clearly, “As long as you are on the right track, I will be with you. If you go wrong, I will leave. I do not like bad sons!” I said, “I am a good son. I will not use your money for my personal enjoyment and luxury. I will only use it for those who need it.”

This is what is happening. Prasad kutir is becoming full, as you can see. Next month about ten thousand villagers will receive blankets; schoolboys will receive bicycles; cricket teams will receive cricket bats and balls; little children will receive balls and games, and young girls going to their husband’s house will receive ornaments, sindoor, mangalsutra, beautiful Bangalore saris, chappals, brassieres and everything they will need there. Why not? I will provide them with the same facilities which God has provided for me. I will love them as God has loved me, because He has helped me. Love does not mean anything else.

Love is awareness! I do not have to touch anybody’s feet. I do not have to kiss anybody. I do not have to put my hand on anyone’s head. Love is love. It is a feeling in me. Love is never physical. Kama is physical, krodha is physical. Love is a feeling; it is kindness. I am not doing all this because it is my nature. I am doing it because He has told me to. When my master says to me, “Listen boy, I have given you a room, why don’t you provide the same for others?” My reply is, “Right Master, it will be done.”

He is my master and I am His servant. This is the feeling between me and my master. I have discovered this relationship. It is not the relationship between Radha and Krishna, between Uddhava and Krishna, between Kaushalya and Rama or Yashoda and Krishna. It is the relationship between a swami and a sevak. My relationship with God is the same as the relationship between Rama and Hanuman, although I do not claim to have the qualities of Hanuman. He was truly great. But my status is that of Hanuman, neither friend nor master.

In the *Bhagavad Gita* (11:40–42), Arjuna tells Krishna that he had rashly considered him to be his friend, because he was ignorant of his greatness. But even that does not apply to

me, because I have always found God to be very mysterious. I thought I could never approach Him as *nirakara*, *nirguna*, nameless, formless, faceless. I could never get it! I am a vedantin. Advaita vedanta is my tradition, but I could never understand these things.

So, I had no qualms about thinking that I am a *sakha*, I am a devotee, I am a friend of God, I am a worshipper or a follower of God. I was just waiting. Suddenly things changed very fast. Earlier, when I received instructions, I would say that they were from my supermind. I even had the funny idea that the higher mind was giving me instructions. But now, I know there is nothing like the higher mind or the lower mind. The mind is the medium. God speaks. The loud speaker or the microphone cannot speak. They can only produce sound when I speak.

When Rama asked Hanuman, “What is the relationship between us?” Hanuman replied:

On the physical level, I am Your servant.

On the mental level, I am part of You.

On the spiritual level, You and I are one.

As long as I have *deha buddhi*, body consciousness, I prefer to remain His servant. As long as I am aware of my physical existence, my relationship with God is one in which I am the servant and You are my master. Tell me what to do! If You order me, I will set the world on fire. I will make it rain nectar, fire or hail all over the world. Your wish will be done. If You say, “No, my dear servant, now you are old, and it is time for you to retire on a pension of fifteen rupees per month”, I will be happy and peaceful to just sit.

The mind becomes tranquil when you have no ego. What is ego? I want to do this, I want to do that; that is ego. But when I am a servant and You are the master, and You tell me what I have to do, then there is no question of ego. If God makes me do good, He may also make me do bad. Who knows what is in His head. I have now given up thinking about who God is. For sixty or seventy long years, I was always thinking about what God could be like. Was He like knowledge or

wisdom? Ultimately, I stopped questioning. I have given up the quest and established a relationship with Him. Now, I love someone whom I have never seen, never met, but about whom I have been thinking since childhood.

Was it when you found God that you stopped enquiring?

No, I have given up looking for the one whom I have been searching for and investigating since childhood. I do not enquire anymore. Now I have decided, whoever You are, I am Your servant.

In *Ramacharitamanas* it has been said:

*O enemy of serpents,
No one can cross the ocean of this world
Without the feeling of service.
So, considering it a holy law
Chant the praises of the lotus feet of Rama.*

Though I have not seen You, my master, I am Your servant. I will do whatever You tell me. If You tell me to clean the toilets, I will do it. If You give me the status of Brahma, fine. "I am the chariot; You are the charioteer." This should be the attitude of everyone.

What does God look like?

That is a very difficult question, although the answer itself has come to me. You know about the beauty of God. You can read about the beauty of God in hundreds and thousands of verses. I have also read them, and I used to sing them every day. I have never seen Him, but I used to speculate about His beauty. He must be unimaginably beautiful.

*I adore Rama, the honoured one of Raghu's family,
Whose limbs are delicate and blue
Like a blue lotus,
Who has Sita adorning his left side,
And who holds long arrows and a long bow.*

*I bow down to Lord Vishnu,
Having a form of quietude,
sleeping on a serpent
With a lotus at the navel.
Lord of the gods, supporter of the universe,
Vast like the sky, having the colour of clouds,
And with beautiful limbs.
Lord of Lakshmi, with lotus-like eyes,
Visualized by yogis in meditation.
Destroyer of the fears of this world.
And master of all the worlds.*

*I bow down to Lord Shiva,
In whose lap Parvati,
The daughter of the mountain king,
Shines with brilliance.
Who holds Ganga, the river of the gods,
Within the folds of his matted locks,
On whose forehead rests the crescent moon,
On whose throat is the stain of poison,
And whose chest is garlanded by the serpent king.*

Then suddenly I found the answer, and this happened because the ego melted. I realized that whatever I am was His benediction. What He did was His will. What I am is because of Him. What I did was because of Him. What I received was because of Him. In the future, whatever happens will be according to His wish. It was only after the dissolution of this ego that the path became slightly visible. When this ego was present, I presumed that I was the absolute doer and had to suffer the consequences accordingly. If you are the doer, you have to be accountable for what you do, for the good as well as the bad. It is not a one day affair, or a one day game.

It was fortuitous that it happened to me, because this process generally does not happen to people of my type. This realization generally happens to those who have been unsuccessful in life. I am a person who has had one success after another. Just as you climb the next step after placing your foot on the first, so I continued to conquer the next step

after every success. I kept climbing higher and higher, with total ease and comfort. I never faced hardships. Whichever project I touched was successful. For a person like me, who has always been successful without much endeavor, to develop an inflated ego would not have been surprising. But every time I was successful in my life, I disowned my connection. I kept detaching myself from all those areas of my life in which I was successful.

This success did not happen due to me. For example, the missionaries came to India with medicines, clothes and schools to help us out. However, when they began to convert people to their religion, there was an outcry. But that is exactly what I did all over the world, and there was not one voice of protest. Why was it so? Did Swami Satyananda have such colossal power? No, it was His will. I simply carried it out and, therefore, there was no protest. Jayasi, a devotee and a poet, has very aptly remarked:

What He desires He does.

There is none to forbid Him.

He gives life to all.

What didn't I do! I changed their names; I shaved their heads; I started an entire tradition, which was an impossible task!

What do you think about relationships between men and women in sannyasa?

I have many sannyasins who live with women. I have told them, "You can live with women, but you must declare it. There is no need to hide this fact. You can have children. Give them good names, hold satsangs in your home. Why should marriage be the means to overcome guilt? Why have guilt in the first place? It is natural for a man and a woman to live together. Declare it and live with dignity."

There are thousands of such couples living together and I have good relations with all of them. I have made it very clear that even though they may not be married, it does not permit them to be involved in any hanky panky. They should be pure. Living together is the natural way for a man and

woman to exist, but society attaches social connotations to it. To overcome certain obvious difficulties, social tradition makes a system around it. You have to walk around the fire so many times, then put the ring on her finger, then do this, then do that, and so on. That system is all right; I am not finding fault with it or criticizing it.

However, if the husband adopts the life of a sannyasi and the wife that of a sannyasini, and they say, “We are disciples of the same guru, therefore we are brother and sister,” I do not agree. Only those born of the same mother are brother and sister. Both of them may be my disciples, but they can still live together as husband and wife, provided they declare that they are living together and that they now have children. I have named the children of such couples too. They live very peacefully, do mantra japa, bhajan, asana and pranayama. They come here. They do not beg. They work at home and teach yoga.

We have a tradition like this, the tradition of guru Gorakhnath. You may not know this. It is a tradition of our vedic dharma. It had to be subdued due to the influence of other religions. The disciples of guru Gorakhnath used to live like karma sannyasins. All those with the red turban are of the Nath tradition. They were asked by their guru to carry on with their occupation. The snake charmer would earn his living working with his snakes. The guru would give them a mantra and a jhola, containing a yoga danda, mala and bhasma.

Bhartrihari and Gopinath belonged to this Nath tradition. You may have heard of the nine Nath: Adinath, Matsyendranath, Gorakhnath, Udaynath, Dandanath, Satyanath, Santoshnath, Kurmanath. Bhartrihari was a king who became initiated into the tradition, because he was disillusioned by the behaviour of his queen.

Would you tell us more about how you found the truth behind your achievements?

I was saying these missionaries came to our country with power in the form of necessary commodities. They distributed medicines and clothing and did many other things to win the

people over. Yet, the people objected. I did the same thing openly, without any facade. How was it possible? In South America, I was once asked what I taught the people. I said that I taught yoga. In reply to that, a man in the audience stood up and said, "How do you and your teachings fit in here?" I answered, "Just as we fitted in nineteen hundred years ago! Christianity is also from the East!" He didn't have an answer. He was left staring wide-eyed. I answered his question, but who made me give that answer?

Later on, he sent me greetings, saying that he was very happy to have met me, because it answered one of his major doubts. He used to think that Christianity was a religion of the West! Christianity is a religion of the East. Very few people realize this. The first thing I say is that Christ was not a Christian; he was a Jew. Buddha was not a Buddhist; he was a Hindu. Mohammed was not a Muslim; he was a tribal. It is the disciples who made the master a Christian, a Buddhist or a Muslim. I can give you more proof of this.

It is not a simple matter to convince people of a culture which is alien to theirs, but I taught them asana and pranayama. I gave them guru robes and spiritual names. This kind of deed is not within the calibre of a human being. All bad deeds are done by me and all good deeds are done by God. When I look back on all that I have achieved, I am amazed. How could an ordinary person like me, a man with limited knowledge, means and intellect, do and say all this? Only through divine will. God's will is operating.

Through this process of realization, when the ego begins to diminish, you may not see God, but you certainly begin to perceive the divine will. Once you see the divine will, then you know that you have come slightly closer to God. The distance remains, but it will diminish by and by, kilometre by kilometre. One day the gap will close and you will merge with God. However, I do not want to become one with God. I want to continue to see Him and want Him to continue to see me. Once I merge into God it will not be so enjoyable.

The enjoyment is in *dvaita*, duality. When you are separate from God, you enjoy it. But when you meet with Him,

when you merge in Him, where is the bliss? Then there is no definition of bliss. This difference, this *bhedabhakti*, is a sutra of bhakti marga.

In *Ramacharitamanas*, Garuda asks Kakabhushundi:

*O dear one, tell me everything
And explain how you got your present body?*

Kakabhushundi replies:

*Austerity, yajna, control of mind and senses,
Charity, non-attachment, discrimination,
Yoga and true knowledge
Are the fruits of devotion to Rama's feet,
Without which none can enjoy permanent security.
It was in this body that I was blessed
With devotion to Rama,
So I have a special liking for this body.*

He says bhakti to Rama was awakened in the heart of that particular body.

*On that account, O Master,
This form is extremely dear to me.
Although my death depends on my will,
Still I do not quit this body,
For, according to the Vedas,
Remembrance of the Lord is not possible
Without a physical body.*

The main thread of bhakti yoga is the difference between God and man. Therefore, I do not say that I am God, although this is written in the Upanishads. Sometime, maybe, I may have that experience also. I cannot say, because it is not in my hands. But I do not have the experience that I am God. From my knowledge, I understand that I am God, but not from my experience. For this experience, one has to eliminate his ego, and have a strong, passionate, hearty desire to unite with God from deep within.

Rabindranath Tagore has said:

*I will have to abandon
This sordid ego of mine,
These worn out clothes too
Have gathered dirt and dust
And have become unfit to put on.
Due to the day's work,
They are so full of heat,
It is unbearable to wear them.
With the day's ending, my work is also finished.
Now it is the time of His arrival.
Let me take my bath,
Let me wear fresh clothes.
Let me collect the evening flowers
And prepare a garland.
Sing and sing soon,
Now the moment has come.*

Are bulls also a suitable offering or should only cows be given?

In India, it is very difficult to prepare a stud bull. It requires an entire ceremony, because the bull, *Nandi*, is the vehicle of Lord Shiva. Nandi is the stud bull on which Lord Shiva rides, and he is considered to be very important. A stud bull is considered very auspicious and a great gift. However, it is difficult to prepare a bull for offering because you have to perform many ceremonies before it is ready to be given. You have to give it a lot of fat, ghee and many things to make it very strong, so that it can produce many cows. Who will look after the bulls which are given to certain institutions? Who can do all the ceremonies necessary, and give them nice food? If a stud bull comes to my door I have to feed him. It is my dharma.

Why is kirtan so popular?

The name of God, when sung together in a group, is called *kirtan*. All over the world people like kirtan. The Australian people do very nice kirtan. One enjoys it very much.

Australian kirtan is full of life. Small children do kirtan together with the elders. Kirtan is the main sadhana of the kaliyuga. Different yugas have had different methods of sadhana like yajna, tapasya, tyaga, yoga, and so forth. But now, in the kaliyuga, these methods are not very common. It is very difficult to do all of them. The mind gets lost. Tyaga or tapasya makes people sick. Yajna is so time consuming that there would be no time left for a job or business. So, in this yuga, naam sankirtan is the most important sadhana. In kaliyuga, the name of God is the only basis of existence. By constantly remembering the name, man can cross over the ocean of life to the other side.

This age is very complex, full of tensions, and it is very difficult to practise many sadhanas. You may practise asana, pranayama, neti and dhauti for your body, that is all right. However, for God realization, for leading a divine life, all the other sadhanas have become redundant, because they are too difficult. The only sadhana that is left for us is singing the Lord's name.

Tulsidas says in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*If one remembers the name,
Even without seeing the form,
Love flashes in the heart spontaneously.
The mystery of name and form is beyond words.
It is delightful if understood,
But words cannot express it.
The name is a bridge
Between manifest and unmanifest.
It is an efficient interpreter,
Revealing the truth of both.
If you have a desire to enlighten
The inner and outer apartments,
Tulsidas advises you to keep
The jewelled lamp of the name
Of Rama on the tongue.
For that is the doorway
Between the inner and outer self.*

Repeat His name in melody, in harmony, with a lot of people, with your family members, for one hour, one and a half hours. Play a guitar, a mridang or a harmonium, and just keep on singing. A very good book of kirtans with musical notations plus tapes has been printed by the Australians, so that people can learn.

Bhajan means 'to sing the name of God in adoration'. *Stuti* means 'to praise the Lord'. *Naam sankirtan* means 'to chant the name of God'. *Naam smaran* means 'to remember the name of God'. There are various ways of doing it. When you sing about the greatness of God, His attributes, His compassion, His grace, His ability to take away our sorrow, it is kirtan about God's *mahima*, God's greatness. When you sing, *Guru Deva Daya Karke*, it is a bhajan. You are praying to God to be kind to you, to be merciful.

There are different feelings and attitudes towards God. You can pray to Him, praise Him, remember His name or do naam sankirtan. They are all the same thing, just like different sweets made out of milk. Somebody might like pera, somebody else rasagulla, curd or plain milk, they are all one and the same thing. But kirtan is the best sadhana for the people of this yuga. In kirtan, all the people chant together.

All the saints say that kirtan is the only sadhana you can do with relaxation and without any difficulty. In this age of tension and preoccupation, you are never free. You have to work to support your family, and you do not have a lot of time. Even if you have time, you are not able to concentrate the mind. Concentration of mind is very difficult in this age. No matter how good, virtuous, honest, calm and quiet a person you may be, with no problems in the family, the mind still cannot be concentrated.

For those who are crooked, who have tensions at home, sorrow, misfortune or health problems, it is useless to even talk about concentration. Even with complete harmony in the family, good children and a nice wife, your mind is not able to concentrate. This is because, in kaliyuga, concentration of mind is only possible for a few people; it cannot be done by

everybody. This is what Arjuna said to Lord in the *Bhagavad Gita* (6:34), “In Dwaparyuga, O Krishna, certainly the mind is restless, turbulent, strong and obstinate, and I deem it as difficult to control as the blowing wind.” However, it is still possible to sing God’s name altogether and immerse oneself in this for an hour or so. This is possible now, but I do not know what will happen in the future.

Mirabai, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Ramakrishna Paramahansa, all spoke about singing and dancing to God’s name. Swami Sivananda used to sing and dance too. Once, in 1950, he was dancing in Benares, at the university. They made a stage for him and one of the wooden boards broke while he was dancing to Agara Bam. Lord Shiva also does the same thing: Parvati sings and Lord Shiva dances. And, do you know, Ganesha also dances, despite his fat tummy! Ganesha eats well, dances and also sings. Sing me a bhajan. I am a lover of music. Everybody loves music. Even animals like music. A person who does not love music is neither a human being nor an animal. Even demons love music. Ravana and Kansa also used to have music in their court. People who do not like music are neither demons nor human beings nor animals. Sing some more; the people have come! In Hindu mythology, Ganesha is considered to be an intellectual, Shiva is considered to be erratic, Vishnu Bhagawan is the one who holds the royal court, and Brahma is a scholar.

In the coming age, music and dance will become very popular. Music has already become so popular that everybody wants to hear it on all the radio programs. Even on TV, there is music most of the time, in the advertisements, in sports, in the films, in every program. From this, you can understand how the human mind is evolving and changing. It finds great rest, relaxation and solace in music. Mahatma Gandhi has said: “Sweet music cools the heat of the atma.” There are hundreds of thousands of kirtans belonging to Shaivas, Vaishnavas, Devi and guru. If you were to try to sing them all, you could sing each kirtan only once, because there are so many of them.

Where do you keep all the clothing and other items before they are distributed to the villagers?

We have a clothes store called Bholenath Readymade Store which remains overflowing all the time. Last year ten thousand blankets were offered for Bholenath! They were distributed throughout the villages. A very important man came here, a member of Parliament. Suddenly he got it into his head to send five hundred blankets of a very good quality. Everything that happens here is in Bholenath's name. You see, when someone is lucky, you must use him. He is lucky, because on the day that a decision had to be made about providing for his food, somebody came and put in money for it.

What is the difference between God and man?

There is only one difference between God and man: we are human and He is divine. We are in the hands of the world and the world is in His hands. The essence of bhakti yoga is the difference between God and man. Therefore, I do not say that I am God. It is written in the Upanishads that one can experience total identification with God. I may also have that experience sometime in the future, I cannot say, but I have not had the experience that 'I am God'. I have read in the Upanishads, *Aham Brahmasmi*, 'I am Brahman'.

This Brahman is like the light of the sun, but it is not the sun. It has all the qualities of the sun, the heat, the light, the brilliance, yet it is not the sun. In the same way, I have all the qualities of atma, paramatma, Ishwara, but I am not Ishwara. I am amara, chetana, sahaja, sukhharashi. When you realize that you are separate from God, that you are his servant, or whatever relationship you have developed, then your sadhana begins, and that is the real sadhana. Prior to that, sublimation, elimination or total destruction of the ego is necessary. You have to kill this feeling of 'I am the doer', or else the bell will not ring.

What is moksha?

I do not know what moksha is, but I can tell you what is written about it in the books. I do not even want moksha. I have read that there is no birth or death after moksha. In *Srimad*

Bhagavata, while bidding farewell to Uddhava, the residents of Gokul say:

*We want our every state of mind
And our every resolution
To take refuge
Under the lotus feet of Lord Krishna.
Our speech and every part of our body
Should be engaged in His shrine alone.
We say from the core of our heart
That we do not desire liberation in the least.
In whatever form we are born,
According to our karmas
And due to the kindness of God,
We wish to behave well,
Donate gifts and receive this fruit:
That our devotion towards our Lord, Sri Krishna
Should go on increasing day by day.*

Only by being born can you enjoy the fun of joy and sorrow. Unless you are born, how will you utter the name of God? By attaining moksha, how will you be able to remember God? What is your goal? Is it to attain moksha or is it to be a bhakta of God? If you want to stay with God, do not even talk about moksha. That is not your faculty. Your faculty is to live with God. Even that is not possible right now, because for that you require a ticket.

The only possibility now is to live with the name of God. Just remember the name of God, that is more than enough for the moment. Tulsidas has said:

*The name of Rama
Is the wish fulfilling tree.
It is the source of blessings in kaliyuga
By remembering the name,
Tulsidas was transformed
From bhang into holy tulsi!*

If you can remember God every morning and evening with as much single-mindedness as you remember your sick child,

your beautiful wife, your old mother, your sister who has gone to her husband's house or a vanquished enemy, know then that you have reached the goal, that your boat has crossed the river. However, if you want moksha, you will have to go to the one who gives moksha.

The idea of moksha does not appeal to me yet. I do not know what will happen in the future. I have read a lot about moksha. Our shastras are full of this concept. Sometimes I used to give lectures about videha mukti and jivan mukti. But as far as sadhana is concerned, just remember one thing. If you can be aware of God just as you are constantly aware of the pain in a wound, it is called *surati*. If this awareness comes, you are lucky and blessed. Kabir has said:

With every breath, remember His name.

Not even one breath should pass in vain.

For no one knows whether that outgoing breath

Will ever return again.

Is vedic astrology a reliable system?

Vedic astrology is a very thorough system, whereas occidental astrology is not. In fact, there are samhitas on vedic astrology such as the *Brighu Samhita*. You just need to tell the astrologer your date of birth. He then finds the relevant nakshatra, and immediately gives you a prediction about your past, present and future. The concept is that all horoscopes from the date of creation to the date of dissolution have already been cast. It is like a computerized system.

There are a few fakes operating in this field and also a few genuine people. I have experienced some of the genuine astrologers and I have reason to believe that their predictions were not coincidence. I am telling you the difference between the efficacy or superiority of vedic astrology as compared to occidental astrology. Some people in Hoshiarpur and Benares have the original *Bhrigu Samhita*. Many people claim that they have copies of it.

Many fortune tellers from India go abroad, particularly to the Muslim countries, because they are very superstitious

people. They are not intellectuals. The intellect has been developed in the West, thanks to science, but even in the West, there are very superstitious people. They believe in astrology, stones, witchcraft, and all sorts of stories. When I was in Torino, Italy, they said that underneath the city are tunnels with many divinities and devils which work there. In England also there is a lot of witchcraft.

Who are the real leaders of humanity?

Intellectuals are those people who can criticize, who have the power of reasoning, with whom you can discuss, and whom you have to convince with great difficulty. These people are the actual leaders of humanity. They give guidance. It is not the sheep who lead; it is the shepherd. There are so many people, sadhus also, whom you do not have to criticize. They have their own brilliance. There are also those who make friends with powerful men without any difficulty, but that does not make a man great.

You should also remember that if you plant a mango tree today, it is going to fructify after ten or fifteen years. When you produce an idea or a philosophy today, it may not have any relevance in your times. In the same manner, I may become a great leader today, be worshipped throughout the world, and even receive the Nobel prize, but I may be convicted by history after five hundred years. A man is judged as great by posterity, after many generations.

A shopkeeper sells you something for the morning, for the evening or for tomorrow, but we are not shopkeepers. We do not teach you something which is necessary for today. We teach what is necessary for the next generation, because the next generation is not going to be running after money like the present one. The next generation, these little kids and their kids will ask, "What is the definition of God?" Just as they asked in the *Shvetashvatara Upanishad*:

*O knower of Brahma,
Who is Brahma, the cause of this world?
Where have we taken our birth?*

*Through whom are we living?
And in whom are we established?
Under whose control do we live our life
In happiness and in sorrow?*

They are going to ask the questions which this generation, by and large, is not asking. This generation is only interested in kama and artha, with no question of dharma and moksha. So, what we teach may not be relevant to the masses today, but it will be remembered by them after twenty or thirty years. Things are moving very fast, and new ideas are emerging every day.

In the next generation, bhakti and dharma will become relevant. You do not have to worry about it. Politics cannot contribute anything positive, creative or constructive to religion. Only two communities can contribute constructively to religion: sannyasins and sages, and research scientists. Neither politicians nor industrialists can promote dharma and bhakti. Only saints, mahatmas and scientists are capable of this.

How should we think about death?

For one year, I moved incognito around India. I did not inform anyone. Someone spread the rumor that I was no longer in this world. It is very good if people think that I am dead, then I am free of their interruptions. I am telling you all that death is not a subject for anxiety. I remember a poem:

*In the dark night, on the river bank,
The blazing flame of a dead body burns,
The sky is weeping; the directions are quiet.*

Death is a festival. If there were no death, there would be no rebirth. Unless the seed is in the ground, the tree cannot come up. Every death leaves a seed behind; that is called life.

Sometimes I think, what is the use of living life in old age, when you cannot play cricket, badminton or anything. You have to eat three hours before you sleep, be careful what you eat, and not eat too much at night. I would like to be able to eat anything at any time! But this could only have happened

had I died a few years ago. By now, I would have been in somebody's lap, so young!

It is a lovely idea, to experience childhood, to live a life free of worries and anxieties, to see everything but know nothing, to have your own definition of things. When we grow up, we have different definitions of life. When we are children, we do not really understand the definitions of grownups. That is why there is a gap between children and parents.

I personally do not think that one should live beyond seventy. Fifty years to work for your family, and then twenty years to guide them with your experience of life, regarding how to live in this crooked world, what to do, what not to do. Just give them a little direction here and there, regulate the switches, and then get out. But of course, I am not going to commit suicide! I will die when the time is due, but I would prefer it to come earlier.

I do not see any fun in life during old age. What is the quality of human life after seventy? The body cannot move much; there are aches and pains in the legs, head and heart. The doctor needs to be called every day, and you spend your money in hundreds and thousands, on special diets and on going to London and America for treatment. All this is useless. I cannot understand why this old car is still in use. This is a 1923 model. There are good cars on the road these days like Marutis and Volkswagens. Why not go for a new one, instead of carrying this old 1923 model? I am not going to break it; it will work as long as it has to, perhaps because this passenger is poor and cannot afford a new car. And of course, 'old is gold.'

Is there any relationship between moha and bhakti?

Moha, meaning infatuation or attachment, is a habit. *Moha* is not the truth. For thousands of years, we have been given the training of *moha* right from early childhood. This is because man wants to keep society bound together like a garland, like the beads of a mala. *Moha* is the name of the thread which accomplishes this purpose. This thread binds beads, gems and other precious stones together. These beads are the husband, wife, children, parents and in-laws. All of them

remain together because of moha. Once the thread is broken, the beads will fall here and there. The relationships between the people will break.

Moha is a creation of society, not of prakriti. While explaining moha in relation to different aspects of mental disorder, Tulsidas writes in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*Delusion is the root cause of all ailments.
Many other diseases spring from it:
Lust is uncontrollable like the wind.
Unfathomable greed is phlegm.
Anger is bile
Constantly burning the heart
Of the diseased man.
If all three make an alliance,
A state of acute delirium occurs
Which is highly painful.*

Then why does the guru come? If there is moha between guru and disciple, both will be ruined. You hold me and I hold you, but neither of us knows how to swim. You will ask me to save you and I will ask you to save me, but both of us will drown.

*The guru and the disciple
Are the blind and deaf.
One does not see and
The other does not hear.*

One should not have moha with anyone, not even with one's own body, let alone with the guru.

*If the guru is blind the disciple is born blind.
The blind will push the blind
And both are destined to fall in the well.*

There is only one with whom we can transform our moha and offer it in the form of bhakti. That is God, whether *sakara*, with form, or *nirakara*, without form.

There is one God, whose form neither you nor I have seen. Nevertheless, we have to find our relationship with Him. We

have to work at finding our relationship with Him and then accept Him as our all. God is everything; this should be our attitude. Life is meaningless without this perspective. Whether you understand it or not, this is the truth. I am in the human body and so are you. The laws that control the human body are the same. I am not beyond prakriti and neither are you. Neither you nor I are masters of prakriti. The law of prakriti says that where there is moha, there is bondage. It is the eternal law.

Since we are in human form, this law will apply to you and me. If I have moha for you, then certainly I cannot say I am a sannyasin. I will be in bondage, perhaps not as much as you, but at least some bondage will be there. About the difficulty of removing moha, Tulsidas says in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*O Lord Krishna, how can this noose of delusion break?
Though we apply millions of devices outwardly,
The inner knot remains entangled.
If the image of the moon reflects
In a cauldron of ghee,
That image can never be burnt by fuel or fire,
Though the cauldron boils for thousands of years.
Just as a bird residing in the hole of a tree
Will not die if the tree is cut,
Likewise, the unthinking mind
Remains impure through infinite attempts to purify it.
We are internally impure
Due to our gross senses and mind.
How can we purify this mind?
By washing it outwardly?
A serpent is never killed
By beating its den in so many ways.
Tulsidas says: without the kindness of the Hari-Guru,
No clear discrimination can be obtained.
And without the power of discrimination,
None can cross the dreadful ocean of the world.*

To be free of bondage, one has to be free of moha. This is the eternal law of nature. To become free from moha, we maintain

our relationship with the guru until there is no more moha. When you have moha with God, there is no bondage, because God has no body, therefore, the laws of karma do not operate with Him.

What is the role of maya and prakriti?

Maya is all encompassing. Everything in this creation, from the largest universe to the smallest atomic particle, is controlled by certain laws of nature. For example, there is the phenomenon of attraction and repulsion. Nothing is beyond the laws of nature, except God. He is not subject to prakriti or maya. He is their creator. God is the creator of nature. However, God does not create karma; Prakriti does. Prakriti is twofold: *para prakriti* and *apara prakriti*, the transcendental nature and the lower nature.

The scientists are working on the material nature which is called *apara prakriti*. The eightfold *apara prakriti* are earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intellect and ego. This is called the material or empirical nature. The scientists work on space, ether, the ozone layer, the electromagnetic fields, nuclear physics. All this is research on *apara prakriti*.

Para prakriti, the transcendental nature, is the basis of everything. She is God's immediate private secretary! Through *para prakriti*, *apara prakriti* is given the order. *Apara prakriti* creates the sun and moon, the stars, the laws of gravity. God created *apara prakriti* and then made the laws of gravity, of biology, of psychology, of philosophy, of karma, of physics, action and reaction.

As you sow, so shall you reap. If you swing the pendulum for a certain distance to one side, it will swing for the same distance to the other. If you hit water, a certain sound will be produced. If you hit a leaf another sound will be produced. All these are laws of *karma*, of action and reaction. God made these rules and He is the only one with whom moha will not produce an adverse effect.

If you think of Him as your husband, daughter, sister or child, it will be appropriate. If you think you are married to God, it will be perfectly all right too. However, if you think

the same towards me, we will both be in trouble, because we live in the world of troubles. God lives above the world of troubles. He is beyond bondage. In the *Bhagavad Gita* (13:17) it says, 'He is said to be the light of all lights, beyond darkness; knowledge, the knowable, the goal of knowledge, seated in the hearts of all.' So, find your relationship with God, whatever it may be. According to your evolution, you have a certain relationship with God. Discover it. I have discovered mine. I know what God is to me and what I am to Him, and I live my life accordingly. The guru is a good tool to remove moha from the *samsara*, the world; he is a small diversion. Later on, however, you have to look for the main diversion.

In astrology or astronomy, for example, at what point does intellectual knowledge become intuitive?

I do not know much about astrology; I only know that there is a principle. They say that the horoscope of everybody, from the time of creation to the time of dissolution, is already cast and there is a law that can cast it. This is very difficult for me to understand. Rishi Bhrigu formed this principle, and on this basis predictions are made. I have found the few predictions I referred to astounding.

The approach to the knowledge of a science which you study, whether astrology or astronomy, is intellectual up to a point, depending on your personality and awareness. After some time, the knowledge which you are pursuing becomes intuitive. A law applies as long as you follow the intellectual or the academic line, and you proceed according to that law. Then there comes a point when suddenly you start developing intuition and, in that intuition, a new law is revealed to you. That is another law. There are laws which the intellect can perceive and there are laws that only intuition can discern.

Intuition itself is a law. The higher mind as you call it, the supermind or deeper mind, becomes aware of these laws which normally the human mind cannot comprehend. They are laws, not accidents, whether it is the law of gravity or some other

law. Newton was doing a lot of research, but suddenly he saw an apple fall down from the tree. That gave him an entry into the inner recesses of his mind and a question arose. In this way, many scientific inventions have been discovered.

Research is the product, not of intellect, but of intuition, and you do not even realize this today when you study science. Which part of the brain does this come from? The brain has millions of circuits. If we were to make a computer containing all the possibilities of this brain, I think it would be as big as many cities. All the computers which are being made are like one small circuit of the brain.

There are many centres of intuition, and that is precisely why you are asked to concentrate on particular parts of the body, like ajna chakra, for example. If you are an ordinary person, not a scientist, and you happen to develop some higher awareness, you suddenly become aware of a particular law, without defining it. There are many rishis who have done this. They have made certain pronouncements without creating a theory to prove it. Now, you have to work out the theory, the epistemology. I do not know the objective approach to the law. I go to the higher mind and suddenly I get an idea and it happens to be correct.

The rishis have always asserted one truth throughout the Upanishads and Vedas, and they have insisted on it. This truth has been stated in the form of the four *mahavakyas*: i) *Aham Brahmasmi*, ii) *Tattwamasi*, iii) *Ayamatma Brahma*, and iv) *Prajnanam Brahma*. These four utterances are translated as: i) I am Brahman, ii) Thou art That, iii) Self is Brahman, and iv) Knowledge is Brahman. They have asserted this time and again, in different ways, even after accepting, encouraging and prescribing *sakara upasana*: worship of the idol, touching and washing the feet of the guru, bathing the shivalingam, and going to places of pilgrimage. They taught all these things, but finally they have come to this point, that I am everything. This is *Aham Brahmasmi*.

There must have been some rishi or sage, who had the awareness of this at some point in time. He must have been searching for the mysterious God. Who is God? Have you

ever thought, “Who is God?” I have thought about this in many ways for many years, through pooja, by crying and by contemplating. Gradually, the rishi’s mind withdrew and became fixed on one point, and he started saying, “Aham Brahmasmi.” He did not create any epistemology or theory of knowledge; he just spoke the truth, the final conclusion.

Now, we have to go through the whole process. We must question: Why did he say that? How can I be Brahman? The essential nature of Brahman and the essence of maya have been explained by the various masters in their own way. Adi Shankaracharya has his own explanation and Ramanujacharya has his. For those who did not understand, the *Bhagavata* and *Ramayana* were utilized. This knowledge is such that sometimes it emerges from *shoonya*, the void, and sometimes from very far into the depths of life. You have to delve into the depths. If you can get into the depths of your consciousness, you are very lucky; you are blessed.

There is just one question: How can one go deep into the consciousness? It is all very easy to say that as a householder you can worship God and sing bhajans. I agree, but to go into the depths of consciousness, the life of a householder is not appropriate. There should not be hindrances on that path. One has to keep moving and never stop, because once you stop, you are done for. If you are a householder, just as you are entering the depths of consciousness, your wife will come to you and say, “Listen, you have to fetch rice from the market.” You are sunk! It is all over. She will go on, “Our daughter has to be married off. What do you think you can achieve by sitting all day, singing bhajans to the Lord?” What a fall, considering where you were going and what you were dragged down for. Your dream is shattered!

Therefore, the rishis and munis chalked out a certain path for those who wish to go into the depths of life. I am not trying to tempt you in any way; you are fine at the stage where you are. However, for those who have grit, strength and vairagya, living a householder’s life is like making an elephant plough the fields.

Bhartrihari has aptly remarked:

*The hope of mankind is like a river,
In which the water of expectation flows.
Desires are its waves, attachments are the crocodiles,
Logic and reasoning are its birds.
The river uproots the tree of patience.
Delusion is the whirlpool, deep and difficult to cross.
While anxieties are its shores.
Those master yogis enjoy unending bliss,
Who cross this river with pure minds.*

What sort of people are able to discover the atman while living in the world?

There are many geniuses in both East and West, who can devote their entire lives to the pilgrimage into their own self, the 'flight into the unknown'. This is a totally uncharted path that is infinite. They go deeper and deeper and find so many jewels. Scientists also do the same thing. I was reading an incident about Newton. A friend of Newton's invited him to dinner. Newton came in the evening, but by that time his friend has gone to a funeral, leaving a note for him on the table that said, "I am sorry, but now I will not be able to entertain you."

Newton decided to sit down anyway. It was 6.00pm. when he arrived. When his friend returned the next morning, he opened the door and found Newton still sitting there. He said, "Didn't you see my note?" Newton did not realize that the whole night had passed, because he had been engrossed all that while in his mathematical problem. It was morning, yet Newton had no knowledge of whether his friend had come for dinner or not. Had it been one of us, we would have fretted over our host's absence every fifteen minutes, and after an hour or so we would have tried to ring him or at least look for the housekeeper. Our equations are totally different to those of people who are not engrossed in the world.

If your mind is not attracted towards the things of the world and cannot deal with them or enjoy them, what does it

mean? It means that your mind is fixed somewhere else. It is preoccupied, either with mathematics, some story, some worry or anxiety, some discovery, some dreams or fantasies. The whole night can pass; you are not interested in your spouse. The wife complains, "What is this? You come home and sit by yourself in silence. You do not talk to me." But the husband is engrossed in another thought, which is so deep that he is not aware of his body, of time, of his surroundings or of food and drink. Later on, he becomes oblivious even to the calls of nature.

That state is the state of yoga, which can be attained by a painter, a sculptor, a sadhu, a mahatma or a yogi. But such people are very few. In *Ramacharitamanas* there is reference to Rishi Sutikshna. When he heard the news that Lord Rama was arriving, his heart dipped into the ocean of bliss.

*O Bhavani, the wise sage
Was so overwhelmed with love,
His condition cannot be described.
He was unable to even see the way
And did not know which direction to follow.
He did not know who he was
Or where he was going.
Sometimes he left, then returned again,
While sometimes he would dance
And sing the virtues of Lord Rama
Under the influence of intense love.
And, hiding behind a tree,
Lord Rama was watching with great delight.*

I have had a few opportunities to meet such persons, who have obtained this state while living in the world. Many years ago in 1969, I met an American artist in New York called Peter Max. I went to his studio and saw his paintings. He had produced some of the most beautiful combinations of colours. I have visited most of the art galleries and museums in the world; that was one of my interests. However, I found his colour combinations to be unique. He became a famous artist. Last year, he was the official artist for the Green Peace

movement and he had his exhibition at the convention for environmental issues which was held in Rio de Janeiro.

I have met many people like that in England, America, Japan and India, who belong to a different dimension of consciousness. They are not aware of their need for food, drink or decent clothes. They are absolutely detached from their spouses and children. They give the impression of being mad and talk only about their obsession. It is an obsession with them, and this type of obsession is necessary on the spiritual path. On the spiritual path, you are treading exactly the same path which an artist, painter, philosopher or scientist is treading. But he has his own frame of mind, while you have yours.

In your frame of mind, it is God; while in his, it is art, music, poetry or some scientific or mathematical principle. But the awareness is the same, and intuition comes only after the light shines from within. In Sanskrit, intuition is called *pratibha jnanam*. *Pratibha* means brilliance, when the light comes from within. You switch on the torch; “Yes, there is a rope, I can see it.” The knowledge or the result which you are searching for is just in front of you, but you cannot see it because you are in darkness, in *ajnana*. When you go into the depths, the light shines. “Eureka! Eureka!” Archimedes exclaimed, when he had this experience.

Have you read the Puranas: *Brahma Purana*, *Vivarta Purana*, *Vishnu Purana*, *Linga Purana*, *Kurma Purana*, *Vayu Purana*? I am talking now about literature, not science. The man who wrote those must have been amazing! He has written them all in *chhanda*, or metre. To write poetry in English or Hindi is different from writing poetry in Sanskrit. In Sanskrit, this *laghu-guru* business continues. *Laghu* means one matra; *guru* means two matras. If on the upper line the first word is *laghu*, the second line must also be, and these are *ya*, *ma*, *ta*, *ja*, *bha*, *na*, *sa*, *ra*. It is very difficult to compose in *chhanda*. You cannot write poetry in Sanskrit easily, because there are too many rules.

Within these rules, Vyasa wrote a fantastic series of eighteen Puranas, plus the *Srimad Bhagavata*. Can you call

that a normal brain? When he asked Ganesha to be his stenographer, he said, “I have called you because you are a great intellectual. I am going to dictate and you must not stop writing.” Ganesha said, “I am not going to stop writing; you just go on dictating in a continuous flow.” So, Vedavyas narrated all the Puranas, including the *Srimad Bhagavata*, and Ganesha wrote them down. It is a brilliant achievement.

We were discussing the *Brighu Samhita* earlier, and that is another example of inspired literature. How can a normal man think that every human being, from the time of creation to the point of dissolution, has a horoscope, and that there is a law that can cast the horoscope of a man who will be born 2,500 or 15,000 years later? How is it possible? It is a science, no doubt, but this science is a product of intuition.

There are two ways of arriving at conclusions. The first is by analysis, investigation, experiment and collecting objective data. The second is by intuition, which comes in a flash. However, intuition is not beyond law. Intuitive brilliance is also based on principles. Whatever has been spoken of in Indian philosophy has been based on intuition. However, the theory of that knowledge, its epistemology which was developed later on, is not as good as that of Western philosophy. This is definitely a drawback of Indian philosophy.

How long should one be dependent on the guru-disciple relationship for guidance and direction in spiritual life?

One should have a relationship with the guru for some years and then one should find one’s own path. This is my view. One should become independent. I am not questioning the fact that one should have faith, *shraddha*, and *bhakti* towards the guru. But perpetually hanging on to the guru for support is not good. We suffer from the weakness of *asakti*, or attachment. After some time, the *asakti* that you feel towards your parents and other near and dear ones is directed to the guru. This will make you stick to him like ‘fevicol’, and it will be difficult to separate yourself from him.

The guru is necessary, I am not disputing this fact, but the dependence on this relationship should not be exaggerated.

After a certain point, you have to become independent, while maintaining your devotion and bhakti for your guru. This is my definite principle. My guru is no longer alive, so what is my relationship with him now? Although he is not alive, I still have faith, devotion and gratitude for him. But when it comes to direction in life, I think my own way, because in the final analysis we have to walk alone.

How does one reach a level of accomplishment in sadhana?

When you take a job or start a business, it is to earn money, which you then invest or deposit in the bank. When the dividend becomes a large amount, you bring it home and spend it. This is the way of the world. When you do sadhana, you desire certain accomplishments, but you do not use the achievements of spiritual life for any worldly purpose. You must never use them. You must put them in long term fixed deposits. One day these accomplishments will pay you the richest dividend in the form of perfect knowledge, *atma jnanam*. Precisely for this reason, it is written in the yoga shastras that these accomplishments are an *upsarga*, a disease. When you come out of samadhi, they are known as siddhis. But when you are in samadhi, they are obstacles. We should use the normal accomplishments, but not the spiritual ones.

My guruji told me on several occasions that when I am amongst householders, they will ask me for alms, *bhiksha*. He said that the dharma of the kaliyuga has changed from that of the satyayuga. During the satyayuga, the sadhu asked for bhiksha and the householders offered it to him. In this kaliyuga, the householders will ask for bhiksha and the sadhu will have to give it to them. Is this not what I have been doing? All these people around me are householders and I give them bhiksha. This is the dharma of kaliyuga; everything is the opposite of what it used to be earlier.

My guruji also said, “Son, do not get taken in by them. They will fall at your feet and worship you. They will garland you and sing verses of praise in your honour, ‘Jai Satyananda’. Do not fall into their trap, my son. Reserve the shakti of your

atma. That is your earning which will be useful for you later on in your spiritual journey.” In spiritual life, when you go through the dimensions of inner awareness, it is the strength of the mind which is very important. He told me that I would face these difficulties, and if I did not give the householders what they wanted, they would not come back to me a second time. He asked me to prepare my mind for these setbacks. I said, “If they do not come back a second time, that will be well and good. I will be relieved of responsibility to them.”

He was right. People are like that. They say, “It is no use going to him. I have been to him twice in the last three years, and I still have not had a child.” Fine, do not come again! They say, “For the past five years, I have been working for my daughter’s marriage. She is now twenty-five. I also took Swamiji’s blessings, but nothing came of them. It seems I will now have to go to a saint’s grave and ask for blessings.” “Go ahead”, is what I tell such people. It does not appeal to me that people should ask me to put in a good word with the Lord for the fulfilment of their wishes. I am neither the minister, prime minister nor an agent of God. I will not become anyone’s agent.

The accomplishment of sadhana is not siddhi. It is *jnana*, knowledge, knowledge of the atma or parameshwara. The day you begin to perceive God, even if very slightly, know that your accomplishments of sadhana are now being used. Even if you begin to have just a foggy idea of God, and you feel that His face lies behind the smoke (you are not sure which form, it could be a beautiful girl, it could be a statue), realize that the karmas you have accumulated during numerous past lives are now coming to your aid.

Would you please explain why it is said that death during uttarayan is more auspicious than dakshinayan?

To understand this, we may begin with these slokas from the *Bhagavad Gita* (8:24–25): “Those who know Brahman go to Him following the path of fire, light, daytime, the bright half of the solar month, the six months of the northern passage of the sun. Following the path of smoke, night, the dark half of

the lunar month and six months of the southern passage of the sun, the yogi obtains the lunar light and returns.'

Hindus believe that when you die during *uttarayan*, the six months when the sun moves to the north of the equator, from December 22nd to June 21st, you attain one of the passages which are written about in the *Bhagavad Gita*. When you die during *dakshinayan*, the six months when the sun moves to the south of the equator, from June 22nd to December 21st, you go through the other passage. These passages also refer to the two paths the consciousness can take when it enters the inner dimension after you have transcended the senses, mind and intellect.

When your consciousness is able to penetrate beyond that, you have the experiences of *agni*, fire, *jyoti*, light, a whitish hue and of dawn. This means you are going through the path from which the consciousness will not return to the material plane. The second meaning is that you have transcended the *indriyas*, or the sensory level of mental and intellectual awareness. You are in the region of the self, the spirit. When you have the experience of smoke, *dhumra*, dark night, *ratni*, and darkness, *krishna*, then it means that you are going through the path of dakshinayan. When you go on this path, you will have the experience of moonlight, or something like moonlight, and then you will come back again as Mr So and So, or Mr X,Y,Z, or Swami Satyananda. You will revert to normal consciousness.

It is explained further in the *Bhagavad Gita* (8:26): 'The bright and the dark paths are deemed to be the world's eternal paths. By the bright path one goes never to return again. By the dark path one goes to return again.' That makes it clear. If you take one path, you will reach the destination; if you take the other, you will return.

The first meaning is the religious meaning. If you die between Capricorn and Cancer you go this way, and if you die between Cancer and Capricorn, you go that way and have to return. There is also the second deeper meaning. You can accept whichever meaning you like. The second meaning is that these are the two paths of consciousness which can be taken, depending on one's karma. My guru told me, "If

you insist on the spiritual path now, you will go through dakshinayan and you will have to come back. Wait for forty to forty-five years and purify yourself. Be free of the passions that are lurking in your mind. Clean up in any way you like and then, one day, sit down. Beyond the senses and mind are buddhi and atma. Go beyond that, then you will not come back.”

My path, however, is very simple. I am a servant of God and I take orders from Him.

If You tell me to stand up,

I will stand up.

If You tell me to walk,

Then I will walk.

If You tell me to sing,

Then I will sing for You.

From morning to evening,

From earth to sky,

I will sing and dance.

The love between us is longstanding. He just needs to give me an order; we have that understanding. It is called *dasya bhakti*, the devotion of a servant for his master.

I used to have an intellectual understanding of this issue of uttarayan and dakshinayan and explain it to people, but I could not retain it in my own mind. For me, it is not a practical thing. I do not say that it is false, but for me, it is too tough, abstract, difficult and complicated to comprehend. Simplicity is for me. God, You tell me what I have to do. You told me to go to Munger and I went. You asked me to go to Australia, so I went. It was a nice place, and the people there were very simple. You told me to leave Munger and go to Rikhia. I left. I became God's servant and there is joy in it. Of course, I am old, but if He asked me to marry today, I would do it, not because I want it, but because He wants it. There must be some good lady who would live with me. It is not a joke! Forget about women, I would drink poison at once if He asked me to.

Once a saint went to a wine shop with his disciples and began to drink. His disciples felt that since Guruji was drinking, they

were perfectly justified in drinking too, so they went ahead and drank. The saint then went to a brothel. Women were dancing, singing gazal, wine was flowing, and the saint was joyfully immersed in it. The disciples said, “Since Guruji is doing all this, we are also free to do it”, and they went ahead. Then the saint walked up to a shop where molten glass was bubbling and he asked for a cupful and began to drink it. The disciples reasoned, “This feat can be performed only by siddhas and mahatmas. This is not for us.”

By virtue of being a mahatma, a siddha or saint can digest molten glass. Similarly, he can digest wine and women, without any effect. This truth, alas, did not strike the disciples when revelling in wine and women. If God tells me, “Satyananda, try drinking some poison”, I will drink it like coffee. It will be divine coffee, not Madras coffee or Colombian coffee, but lovely Brazilian coffee. When I went from Colombia to Brazil, they gave me coffee in one small cup. It was like brandy! My brain was spinning in circles. I am not an addict of coffee, but it is good and sometimes I drink it. God’s will is divine coffee for me.

Satsang 15

November 24, 1994

The toughest dharma of all is that of a servant. There is a reference in Ramayana to the time when Sri Ramachandra was in exile in the forest. His younger brother, Bharat, decided to bring Rama back to Ayodhya. He felt that by sending Rama into exile, his mother had blemished his integrity. So he decided that to bring Rama back would be the right thing to do, and it would also exonerate him from public suspicion. He gave orders in Ayodhya to prepare for Rama's coronation and went to the forest to look for him.

When Bharat met Rama, he hesitated to tell him of his decision. He thought, "How is it possible for me to ask him to return to Ayodhya? He is my master. This would be tantamount to ordering him. How can one order God Himself to do this or that? It is up to Him whether He wants to come to Ayodhya or remain in the forest. How can a servant order the master to act according to his dictates?" So, Bharat was in a deep dilemma, regarding what to say to Rama.

Eventually he said, "If you permit, all three of us brothers, Laxman, Bharat and Shatrughna, will go into exile in your place. You please decide the course of action, because I am your servant, and a servant never has any choice. I have no preference." Rama said, "Bharat, you are extremely learned. You know dharma and ethics. You know the circumstances which brought me here, and which principle I uphold in this decision of mine. I came here to fulfil the vow of my father. Let us find a way out by which both of us can maintain our dharma."

One thing has to be kept in mind by everyone, be it God, guru or parents, always remain aware of your relationship with God. The dharma of a servant is the most difficult, but it is also the most superior. If the servant is a real servant, he controls the master. A servant is the commander of his master, but he should be the type who has no preferences or choices of his own. If he has choices of his own, he is no servant.

When a servant lives in the spirit of a servant, he controls the master. You must have seen an old loyal servant who would run the entire household and take care of the master's wife and children, who could be left alone with him. They had no preferences of their own. The bhakta of God should have the same attitude, that of a true servant. This is my relationship with God. Every man should find out his own relationship with God. What is your relationship with God? You have to discover that. You may not discover it now, but at some point in life, you will have to. Until you discover your own relationship with God, your behaviour pattern cannot be decided.

I do japa because God has clearly told me to do continuous japa with every breath, twenty-one thousand, six hundred times per day. I have accepted this as an order. He may ask you to do something else.

*I should not be unaware of this glory,
Even for a moment,
That Lord Rama is my master
And I am His servant.*

What is the difference between guru mantra, ishta mantra and other mantras?

The guru mantra is your personal mantra and it is the ideal mantra for sadhana. There are other specific mantras like the Mahamrityunjaya mantra. This cannot be the ishta mantra; it is for specific purposes like illness and physical problems. Mantras are of many types: nishkaam mantra, sakaam mantra, ishta mantra, vedic mantra and tantric mantra. In vedic mantras, you have the mantras of Shaivas and Vaishnavas.

Then you have specific mantras. You also have some mantras of which the meaning and purpose are unknown. There are many mantras. You can read the book *Mantra Mahodadhi* if you wish to know more about them.

Your ishta mantra is intended for spiritual growth. You use it to sit down and quieten your mind daily for fifteen to twenty minutes. You use it to remember God, and to keep your mind and body pure. If you want to do Mahamrityunjaya mantra, go ahead; it makes no difference, but do not compare the mantras. All mantras are equal in power, but some have specific purposes.

Which are the sakaam mantras?

There are many mantras which are sakaam. Just as there are special types of knives for chopping vegetables, for applying butter or for cutting necks, similarly, there are different kinds of mantras. I cannot tell you the right way to use mantras. Some people use them for curing jaundice or measles; others use them to hurt their enemies. There are lakhs of sakaam mantras.

Why are women disregarded by Indian spiritual traditions?

In ancient India, in the vedic culture, women also used to receive the sacred thread, the *yagyopaveet*, and they practised japa of the Gayatri mantra. They also used to practise sandhya vandana. But later on, India became a prey to foreign invaders. Many cultures, ideas, races and philosophies came in, and when these became politically powerful, they imposed their systems on the society.

Vedic culture was different. At that time, women had a prime place in society. All the systems were named after women. Vedic culture never talks of pitrivansha, but of *matrivansha*, maternal lineage; it never talks of pitribhoomi, but of *matribhoomi*, mother land. The names of male offspring were given according to the names of their mothers, i.e. Kaushalyanandan (Rama), Kaunteya (Pandavas), Devakinandan (Krishna).

The same thing happens in every nation when a foreign culture comes in. Gradually, they take political power, attain

economic power and thus get a hold over the society. So, the people have to accept what they say. Degradation of women is alien to us. In vedic culture, women were in the forefront of society. They used to sit in parliament. Gargi was in the court of Janaka, the King of Videha. If you read the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, you will find that Gargi asked Yajnavalkya, in court, to define the imperishable government. He replied, "I will explain it to you. The imperishable government is the one with the eternal law. The law of the movement of heavenly bodies is the imperishable government. By this law, the sun and the moon move in their respective directions and their movements can be calculated thousands of years before they start moving." There are records of many such exchanges.

So, in vedic culture, women were in the forefront, but were made to recede into the background on account of foreign invasions. In the last few years, things have been changing again, because of the balancing effect of modern culture and women are again coming out. In a few decades, they will be very active in society. It is pleasing to see women as a part of our society, and not just as a part of the kitchen, toilet or laundry. That is the contribution of the modern West.

In England, only one hundred and fifty years ago, women were not allowed into the office. The first woman secretary employed in an office went to work every day with her body completely covered from top to bottom. She was placed in a separate room with a little table outside, on which she would place the completed typewritten papers. These would then be collected. So, Western society was equally backward, but modern culture has revolutionized these ancient concepts.

Do women have voting rights in India like in Australia?

All women in India have reserved, compulsory voting rights. Women in India have rights, but I am not talking about rights. I am talking about the cultural influence in the minds of the people. I am talking of a social concept. I am not talking of political improvement or political privileges. Society is something which is influenced by cultural thought, by

philosophy, by power, by politicians, by kings and rulers, and by compulsions.

If people started going to Australia in order to pick up an Australian woman and kidnap her, the society and laws there would certainly have to change. If any such thing happened in the West, if rowdies started kidnapping women there, society would have to change. I went to Afghanistan and stayed for six or seven days. During that time, I did not see even one girl; there were only men everywhere. I said, "Oh God, what a dry country!" Women counterbalance the personality of men, and men complement the personality of women.

Similarly, in Kuwait, there were no girls to be seen, only men as far as the eye could see. It was very difficult to live in such a place. In the evening, when I held a meeting, a few American and British women attended. So, there was some respite, like resting under the shade after having been in the scorching heat! What kind of society is this? But they have to keep the women inside. If their women are let out, they will be carried away. In Afghanistan, there are social constraints. Due to cultural and organizational difficulties, social restrictions have to be introduced, and rules have to be made for any society.

We can see today that it is possible for women to come out, to be educated, to become lawyers, judges, doctors and nurses. If you go to Western countries like America, Australia or Switzerland, you can see this with your own eyes. It is possible for women to maintain their dignity and at the same time take an active part in the building of a nation. In India, those who are convinced of this are allowing their female children out, and this is certainly a good sign.

Keeping women at home is a misuse of capital, a wastage of money! Women are extremely powerful in a society with Western dimensions. They have very good brains and the qualities of compassion, affection and endurance. Just imagine how much pain a woman goes through while giving birth to a child! The pain at the time of delivery is the pain of death. If I had to have a child, I would put my foot down after the first delivery and say, "No more. I will go for a tubectomy."

But women are not willing to get a tubectomy, even after five deliveries. Such is their endurance!

There is another amazing thing that they do. They can go into a stranger's house and make it their own. They become the maharanis of that place. They become the Lakshmi of the house. Is that an ordinary quality? Do men go to their wives' parental homes? The man who stays at his wife's parental home has no personality remaining. He suffers from a sense of inferiority, but women can go to their in-laws and remain superior! Women have a basic ability to adjust in this manner. They do not say, "I am going to my husband's house." They say, "I am going to my father-in-law's house."

The other quality that women have is *viveka*, discrimination between right and wrong, the ability to distinguish between dharma and adharma. If a man was required to go out to work and keep the house and take care of the children, he would go insane. But the women go to work, give birth to children, feed them, keep house, go marketing and do other things as well.

It is important that we have a special respect, regard and recognition for the women of our homes, the wife, mother, daughter, daughter-in-law or sister. We must change our attitude towards women completely and have greater faith in their purity and willpower. Women have *sankalpa shakti*, willpower. Once they decide something, they do it. As far as being religious goes, I believe that all over the world, in China, Japan and Europe, amongst Anglo Saxons, Indo Europeans or Jews, ninety percent of the women go to religious meetings and are members of religious societies and associations.

A man will go ahead and drink Scotch even if he does not have money to pay his bills, but a woman will never do this. Therefore, in this context, women have superior qualities, not only in India, but the world over. You can verify this anywhere in the world. The traits of women remain the same. Women have valuable qualities. We will have to acknowledge, value and respect them, and utilize these qualities for building the nation as well as the family.

The local women here use time-tested systems for contraception. They have certain herbs which they tie around the waist for birth control. They do not take pills or use hormone tablets or condoms. They have a different body structure.

Are there special laws regarding purchase of tribal land in this area?

The people living here are the original inhabitants of this land. The government law is that you cannot purchase this land. People are very shrewd. They pay them very little and acquire their property. India is a free country, so generally you can purchase property anywhere, but here you cannot. It is very hard to get land in this area. All the plots of land have certain legal boundaries and there are many restrictions on transfer.

The people here are very simple; you could easily cheat them. When Europeans went to New York, they purchased it for twenty-five dollars! You could do the same here. So, there are strict laws in this area and also in Kashmir. Here, if you can find unused land, you can build on it and make a home. But if I want to purchase a lot of land here, it's not possible. The local people come here every year and dance their tribal dances on certain occasions. They have made a bow and arrow for me.

Which is the best sadhana for people living in these times?

Tulsidas, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and other saints and mahatmas used to say that, in the kaliyuga, all the paths to reach God are very difficult. The only simple path is kirtan. Today, everybody's mind is restless. It cannot rest at one point. To find God, one must do a lot of tapasyas and yajna. It is not possible for everyone to do it. One will have to choose between doing a job and doing yajna, and yajna costs a lot of money too.

When a group of four or more people get together to sing the name of God, it is called kirtan. I sing too, but I sing alone. Singing alone is called *bhajan*. When ten, twenty or thirty people sing kirtan together, they generate a combined energy. It is very powerful. The house where kirtan is done

gets purified. Bad spirits do not reside there. People remain in a good mental state. All the filth disappears, because the name of God has the ability to destroy bad energy. When the light of the sun appears, the darkness disappears. The name of God is like light. It enlightens and purifies wherever it exists. I wanted people to sing kirtan here in a large group, and today this is happening for the first time.

When four or five children get together at home and sing film songs, nobody stops them. Similarly, they should get together and sing the name of God. You eat sweets and also chillies, which have a different type of taste. The taste of film songs is of fun, while the taste of kirtan is of peace. Kirtan will rid your house of all its bad energy. You must have noticed that in some houses, someone or other is always sick. Very rarely is there no sickness in the house. Why does this happen?

Despite the house being pleasant and clean, if people are unwell, it means that there are evil spirits residing there. Banishing them from the house is not an economical task. If you get a pundit to do it for you, he will ask for a lot of money. The method of kirtan costs nothing, but does the job well. The parents and children only need to sit together and sing the Lord's name: *Sri Ram Jaya Ram Jaya Jaya Ram* or *Sri Krishna Govinda Hare Murare*. If they sing it in unison, repeatedly, it is called kirtan. Singing the praises of the Lord is called *stuti*. Asking the Lord for something through song is called *prarthana*.

Why is it that so many spiritual institutions collapse?

Near Satna is a place called Ramban. There was once a very good institution there. The founder and administrator of that institution was a very nice man, but now he is no more. Any establishment of this type that is not run by sannyasins becomes devastated by the heirs, who eat up all the funds. I have seen it in many organizations. They meet their end the way the family property does. The father works hard and earns well, but the sons are not interested in earning and fritter away the wealth. The organization in Ramban used to publish a magazine called

‘Manasmani’. I used to write for it, and it published some very good research on *Ramayana*.

There is so much kidnapping and dacoity going on nowadays. Have you ever had experiences with these types of people?

In my parivrajaka days, I used to move around for most of the year, but during chaturmaas I would stay in one place and do my sadhana. One year I did chaturmaas sadhana in Kalchuria, a village near Raipur. A dacoit of the Chamba region lived there. He became my disciple. He was totally illiterate, and since I spoke very good English, he was suspicious at first of this sadhu who spoke English. He had only seen sadhus puffing ganja. He thought I was a spy from the criminal investigation department of the Government. Not only did I speak good and fluent English, but also pure Hindi and Sanskrit, in addition to many other languages. He was convinced that I was a CID man. He used to come and sit near me daily, and gradually his doubts faded.

When he realized that I was not a spy, and was only there for four months to do my sadhana, he became a disciple and opened his coffers to me. He had cash in bundles. I told him to deposit it in the bank, otherwise it would rot or get eaten by the termites. He did not even have the concept of a bank account, and thought somebody would steal his money from there. I put all his money in a bank for him. He did not have a son, only a daughter. I told him he should find a husband for his daughter who would live in his house. People do not like to keep the daughter’s husband in their house as it is below their dignity. I asked him to forget about status and ensure a caretaker for his wealth and property.

He was a very loving man. He would drink red coloured country brew and then eat betel nut mixed with lime. After this, he would smoke bidi and then drink again. These activities would go on in this order for the entire day. You will not believe it, but he died at the age of ninety! He ate meat twice a day, so when I went to his house he would employ a different cook, although it does not make any

difference to me who cooks my food. I do not believe in caste differences.

There was an extremely arrogant brahmin who also lived in Raipur. Every day I gave satsang and four or five people came. It is my belief that from one light the entire world has taken birth, so all are equal. Now, all day long that brahmin would say that the Veda shastras speak of caste differences. I told him, "Listen Panditji, I have personally read, taught and translated the Vedas. What can you tell me about their contents? It is not written in the Vedas or *Manusmriti* that a brahmin is a higher being by virtue of his birth, and a chamar should be below him in all respects.

Slowly, he accepted my views, but the attitude in maintaining the so-called purity of the kitchen, by not letting low castes come near it, did not change. People agree in principle, but they do not change in practice. Their lives do not change. People must learn to differentiate between two things. The rules of health are perfectly valid in their own place. Not to drink water in a dirty or diseased person's house is a valid restriction. One should discriminate as far as maintaining the disciplines for health, but to be caste conscious makes no sense to me. Caste distinctions are the creation of society, not of God. I believe:

*The whole world has emerged from one light.
It is difficult to say who is good and who is bad.*

Caste does not make anyone great or small. Great people have been born to all religions, castes and strata of society. They have been born in both poor and rich homes. In fact:

*God made everyone a human being.
It is we who have labelled them
As Hindu and Muslim.*

Lord Rama was born into a royal family, but Valmiki was a dacoit. He even robbed sadhus! Once he accosted a sadhu and asked him to hand over his belongings. It is very difficult to overpower a sadhu! We have an all-encompassing life experience! The sadhu managed to overcome Valmiki.

Valmiki asked him for a mantra. The sadhu thought that if he gave the mantra *Rama* to Valmiki he would scoff at it or think that he was proselytizing, so he asked Valmiki to repeat *Mara*, meaning death. Repetition of *mara* was actually repeating the name of Rama backwards, and by this practice Valmiki became one with Brahman.

*By repeating His name in reverse
Valmiki became like Brahma.
The world is a witness to it.*

We find many such stories about our rishis and munis. Vashishtha himself was from a family of potters.

In vedic culture, the learned man was a *brahmin*, the businessman a *vaishya*, the warrior a *kshatriya*, and the servant who toiled was a *shudra*. Caste was decided not by birth, but by karma. Raidas was a cobbler. His friend was going to Kashi Vishwanatha on pilgrimage, and Raidas said to him, “I am too poor to go to Benares. Please offer two packets of *haldi*, turmeric, to Mother Ganga on my behalf.” His friend reached Benares and bathed in the Ganga. When he was climbing up from the ghat, he remembered that he had forgotten to offer Raidas’ *haldi* to the Ganga. As soon as he turned, two hands emerged from the Ganga and he heard the word “*haldi*”. Mother Ganga asked for the *haldi* sent by Raidas. She did not think that the *haldi* touched by Raidas could not be accepted! In *Ramacharitamanas*, Lord Rama says to Sabari:

*O great Lady, listen to me
I do not recognize any other relationship
Except that of devotion.
Despite caste, kinship, lineage, dharma,
Reputation, wealth, power,
Family, virtue and ability,
A man devoid of bhakti
Is as worthless as a cloud without water.*

Every understanding and rational person should think about how this society, which is divided on the basis of caste, can be an evolving society. Ours is a country of rishis and munis, and

we have here the concept of one Brahman, one Ishwara, one Atma, one Paramatma. It is believed here that the same God resides in you, me and everyone. Tulsidas has said:

*Feeling the whole world
Pervaded by the Lord,
With whom can we fight?*

When it is the same God residing in me and you, where then is the difference between me and you? I do the work of a sadhu, you work in a factory, he works in a garage, he works in the electricity department, he works in the Public Works Department, and he is a minister. This is the only difference between us. How else are we different?

To divide and fragment society over this difference is absurd and gravely erroneous. This has been, and still is, the major tragedy that has befallen this country. The downfall of this country started the day the caste system was introduced. The entire world has a social structure. The intellectual class, the trader class, the warrior class, exist in every society. But in this country everything is hereditary. If a child born to a brahmin becomes an engineer in the public works department, does he still remain a brahmin or does he become a shudra? A man is known by his karma, not by his caste. Today, the identity of a man is recognized through his actions, not his birth.

The people of Kalchuria were very strange; they were very obstinate and also very nice. When I was leaving them after chaturmaas, they told me to take as much money as I wanted from them. I said, "What will I do with so much money? Please give me only the bus fare to Allahabad." Money received for nothing is not useful, and property acquired through unjust means does not stay for long. Money made through adharma brings calamities to the family. Regarding this, Kautilya has said:

*Wealth earned by wrong means
Remains only for ten years.
In the eleventh year,
It is lost along with the capital.*

This is a principle, and if it were not true, the world would be full of dacoits and thieves.

If someone embezzles or loots one lakh rupees, his wife develops cancer within six months and he has to spend fifty thousands rupees on that. His son becomes an unreliable element, steals ten thousand rupees and elopes with someone's daughter. What is the net gain? Why steal at all in the first place? A daily income of twenty to forty rupees is adequate and preferable to this kind of big money. Why do you feel jealous when you see the success of others?

The dacoit of Kalchuria insisted that I accept not less than five thousand rupees, but I refused saying that I only wanted the bus fare to Allahabad. The world functions on the basis of dharma. *Dharma* means 'good deeds'. *Adharma* means 'bad deeds'. If dharma did not reign in the world, it would be full of bad people. They would beguile our daughters and run away with them. If there is security at home, it means there is dharma. It is not that murderers and bad characters do not exist, they do, but they cool down after a while.

I went to Kalchuria again. There was a police inspector there called Dharmadas. He was a very learned brahmin and a scholar of the *Bhagavad Gita*. I stayed in his house and I introduced the spinning wheel, *ambar charkha*, there and also bee breeding and a few other occupations. This prompted the villagers to abandon bidi making and take up spinning on the *ambar charkha*.

In Munger district, there was a very ferocious dacoit, who became my disciple and a great bhakta. He told me, "Swamiji, my daughter and my wife are unwell." I told him it was only natural that all this was happening to him. After all, he had caused sorrow to all the families that he had robbed. He had their curse on his head. There is a village called Laxmipur Najira in Munger district, and the entire village is an agency for dacoits. They invite dacoits to commit crimes for them on a contract basis and then pay them for their services.

Once there was a dispute amongst them, and consequently, the entire village was burnt down and many throats were slit. The day after this happened, I reserved a steamer on the

Ganga and sent all my swamis to the village with food and clothes. Within fifteen days, the houses of the ravaged village, which were of hay and bamboo, were repaired. Later on, the rehabilitated villagers became my bhaktas.

I do not miss the opportunity to speak my mind. I openly say that we are sadhus, and thieves are also our disciples. However, we do not justify stealing because of this. What is adharma is adharma. When adharma increases in society, the people become insecure. When dharma increases, the environment becomes secure. There is peace, contentment and employment. The poor get work, and there is no violence. So, the inhabitants of that village became my bhaktas and we used to hold seminars there. I never went there myself, but the swamis would go and hold kirtan sessions there.

Satsang 16

November 25, 1994, Morning

Do you consider certain situations or events in life as positive or negative?

Nothing is positive or negative for a man who cannot be broken. To expect a life without any challenges is not a practical dream. If anybody wants such a life, he is foolish. All great nations and great men forged their way by fighting for every inch of success. They had to lose before they gained. So, at least in my dictionary, a negative situation is not an obstacle, rather it is a challenge. Perhaps, you do not know this, but in some countries like Greece, I did face obstacles and challenges, but even then I continued to visit Greece many times. I didn't care. I knew that Greece was beautiful.

As a matter of fact, Greece is the mother of Western culture. Western science, medicine and technology have all originated from Greece. The Western social system is the utopia of Plato, which has come true. Plato thought of an ideal society, like that which is found in the West today, in countries such as England, Switzerland or Australia. Of course, these countries have developed a lot since then. However, it is Greek culture, thought, philosophy and medicine, which is at the root of their culture. What is Western philosophy? Except for Greek philosophy, there is no Western philosophy as such.

Therefore, it is necessary that India and Greece try to live and work together, but before that happens, we have to fight our way out. The fusion of two chemicals into one another is preceded by much reaction. Greece may not be as prosperous

today as most of the European nations, but we cannot deny that it has been the birthplace of a philosophy, a way of life, a dharma and a civilization. In India, we acknowledge that. Chandragupta married a Greek girl. In Greek, he was called Chandrakautas. His grandson, Ashoka, was half Greek and half Indian. He was a brilliant king, known as Ashoka the Great, and the period of his rule is known as the 'Golden Age of India'.

Did you ever propagate yoga in the Middle East?

In 1967, I was invited to visit Iran. During my stay I had a television program for one hour and forty five minutes. Originally, I had been invited for only ten minutes, but the interest was so great, that it was continued. They asked me so many questions on all kinds of subjects: sufism, kundalini yoga, chakras, ishk hakiki and ishk mizazi.

There was a steady flow of questions and I could answer them all, because I had studied sufism and, moreover, I knew the language. Therefore, I had no problem. It was a phone-in program and the telephones rang constantly. The television pandits paid me a lot of money and with that I made a trip to New York and back. Sufism and vedanta are the same, so I had no problem. I only had to translate the Sanskrit terms into Sufi terms which was not difficult.

Swamiji, if you come to Iran, we will welcome you. Many thousands of people will be waiting for you.

Yes, but it would be better if Iran comes here, rather than I go to Iran. It is the mountain which has to come to Mohammed now. These days, if you go to Iran, you have to cover yourself with the burka. It was not like that in 1967. Then I saw women wearing skirts on the streets, just like in the West.

I have had cancer for five years now. Recently, I had a series of hormone therapy injections which has come to an end, and I have been told that I should have chemotherapy, but I feel I cannot endure it. Would you advise me?

You should follow the conventional therapies, not the alternative therapies. Change your diet to raw fruits, raw vegetables,

curd, oats and barley; no meat, no eggs, no fish. That is all, then you will have no problem with the therapy. A diet of fruit and vegetables is always superior to an animal diet. This is not only my view; it is more or less the universal view. Curd is good for you, but not milk. Germinated food is always better for everyone. All will go well. You don't have to think too much. These are the ups and downs of life.

I would like to ask about the effects of Om chanting, amaroli and homeopathic drugs on cancer patients. What do you feel about it?

I do not discuss these things now. I do not talk about yoga or give guidance. My subject matter has changed, and now I only talk about God and bhakti. I have no other topic in my life. I have written books and you may read those books. Swami Niranjana and others will guide you on this, but I do not talk on these methods now. It is the instruction of my Lord. I think only about God and bhakti and I do everything for God and bhakti, nothing else. All these questions are now absurd to me here. They are applicable outside, but here they are all absurd. I am telling you about the subject of bhakti, which no one else discusses. I will not talk about amaroli, vajroli, asana, pranayama, chakras, kundalini, moksha, sankalpa or samadhi.

I only talk about God and devotion to Him, how a man can become close to God, and what are the ways by which you can feel God in your heart. Just as you feel pain, joy, remorse, sleep and hunger, you can feel love for God. Once you have begun to feel that, you will be the happiest person in this world. The only person who is happy in this life, is the one who thinks of God, who lives in God, and for whom the subject matter of life is God. For him, there is no cancer, poverty or difficulty. For him, in front is light, behind is light, to the right is light, to the left is light, everywhere is light.

*On paths, on river banks, in streets, in orchards,
In trees, in creepers, in gardens, in jungles,
On doors, on walls, on thresholds, on windows,*

*In diamonds, in necklaces, in ornaments,
In the body, in groves, in bushes,
In Gopis, in Gokul, in cow herds, in music,
In lightning and in clouds too,
Wherever you look, only Krishna is visible.
And Shaligram is covering the eyes and mind.*

Therefore, as long as you are here, bhakti will be the only topic I will attend to. All other topics are extraneous to me. Now, the Munger swamis discuss those topics that I used to speak about, and the Paiania swamis will discuss them also. That is perfectly all right, because the whole world cannot talk about God, but Satyananda will talk about Him only. Whether you like this subject or not, he does not care. This is the one topic which people do not talk about. They always feel shy to talk about devotion to God and the relationship with God.

*Search for either
The chief person of the village
Or the Lord.
Do not keep one foot in each boat,
Otherwise you will lose
Your opportunity in this birth too.*

After all, who do you think you are? Where have you come from? You came from your mother's womb, but who created your life? Why doesn't a little mushroom come out of the mother's womb? Because of the great, eternal power who controls the laws of nature and the different elements of nature. We are very far from Him, but He is very close to us, nearer than our breath, nearer than ourselves. Perhaps I am He, who knows?

Kabir says:

*O Lord, Your glory is pervading everything
Just as the redness is not visible in myrtle leaves.*

Please, tell me the way that leads to the love of God.

If you want to dream, first you have to go to sleep. Without sleeping, dreams do not come. If you want divine blessings, first you have to stop wanting them.

You told us that He is very close to us, but we are very far from Him. Devotees try to get close to God by offering flowers, incense and other things. But what is the simplest way to feel the love of God for us?

Forms of rituals such as offering incense are necessary. I do not doubt or challenge them, but you have asked for a simple way. That is what you have to search for; that is what you have to discover for yourself. As I tell everyone, we are all related to God. Everyone is related to God. What is that relationship? Once you realize that relationship, that is the simplest way to feel His love. If you cannot discover that relationship, every way is difficult. It can take years and years; it may take the whole life. Without discovering your relationship with God, you will not be able to reach Him.

Burning incense sticks is necessary; I do it too. Every morning and evening, I burn incense sticks, light a fire, put a lot of perfume in it, do arati, and other nice things. But it took me many years to be able to do this. Of course, fifty years is nothing. I was not even sure that I would be able to discover the relationship in this life. It came to me suddenly. He gave me the way; He revealed the relationship. I had tried my best to discover my relationship with God. Is He my father? Is He my mother? Is He my friend? Who is He to me? Is He my God? Is He my ishta devata? Is He my beloved? Nothing was clear.

When one says, "God is my father," what does it mean? I do not have any emotions of the kind that a son has for his father. Or, "I am God's beloved;" I do not know what the emotion of a beloved towards her lover is. If I had realized my particular relationship with God, then I should have been able to express the emotions corresponding to that. If I think that I am the son of God and He is my father, I should be able to express, experience or feel that love. However, it

did not happen like that with me. When Lord Rama asked Lakshman not to accompany him to the forest, the latter replied:

*I do not know either guru, or father or mother.
O Lord, believe me, this is my nature.
Of all the worldly relationships,
Of love or faith of which the Vedas sing,
You and You alone are all, my Lord,
O friend of the poor and dweller in every heart.*

Finally, I realized that He is the master and I am the servant. Then the emotions began to grow and I began to feel my relationship. What is the feeling of a servant? What is the attitude of a servant? What is the philosophy of a servant? What is the thought pattern of a servant? What are the duties of a servant? What are the limitations of a servant? What are the accountabilities of a servant? It was all so clear to me. I said, "That is right." But He revealed it to me; I could not get it myself. Similarly, God will have to reveal your relationship with Him to you.

Those people who identify themselves with the body, whose minds remain within the framework and limits of the body, who are not spiritualized and who have physical instincts, should practise servant bhakti. I have that nature, therefore, I am aware of my body, I am aware of hunger, I am aware of pain, I am aware of all the physical things. So, what relationship do you expect me to have with Him? A servant-master relationship.

Once your mind becomes immersed in God, transformation will take place. There will be an automatic metamorphosis. In *Srimad Bhagavata*, Maharishi Pippalayan says:

*When the desire to obtain
The lotus feet of the Lord becomes intense,
Then, like fire, that devotion
Burns out all the impurities
Derived from karmas and attributes.
In this purified state, the element of atma emerges,*

*Just as the sun becomes clearly visible
When the eyes are without defects.*

When a young man and a young woman love each other, they are immersed in each other. He is aware of her, not of himself, and she is aware of him, not of herself. At that time, changes take place within them, in the physical and in the mental spheres. In *Srimad Bhagavata*, Avadhoota Dattatreya says to King Yadu:

*When the mind is well established
In the lotus feet of the Lord,
The dirt and dust gathered by the karmas
Are washed away, one after another.
And, as the attribute of sattwa grows,
Rajas and tamas are destroyed
As fire dies in the absence of fuel.*

Now, you have to search, for without searching, you cannot find it. It has been said:

*Those who do not face stumbling blocks
In their search for the Lord,
Never reach the destination.*

Of course, it can happen that He may be very kind to you, and His grace may dawn on you. This has happened for some people, who were not at all aware of God until suddenly they confronted Him. I did not want God, but He was there. Such people are very few, but that can also happen.

*On the path of love, there comes a time
When the traveller gets a call
From the destination.*

There is a legendary story. A hunter went out hunting and night fell before he could return to his base. The forest was wild, deep and dense, and he had to spend the night there. He climbed up to the top of a tree and sat down. Then he began to feel drowsy. What could he do? He started picking up one leaf at a time and throwing it down. The whole night he continued

to throw leaves. Before dawn, the whole area around him was illumined. Lord Shiva came to him and said, "Why have you worshipped me? Tell me, what is your request? What is your need?" The hunter replied, "But I did not worship you!" Lord Shiva said, "You offered me bilwa leaves continuously throughout the night!"

There is a tree called bilwa in India. It is also on these premises. The leaf of that tree is the only thing that is offered to Shiva. The bilwa or bel is a tree which has large, sweet fruit. It has many leaves and big thorns, one and a half inches long. The hunter had been offering the bilwa leaves all night. For him it was a simple act of ignorance which became an act of spiritual life. Like that, there are many such instances in the lives of certain people, not only in India, but outside India as well. They 'bump into God' by chance. However, such people are very few. All the rest will have to work for this life after life. One life is not enough.

How can one present the concept, idea or feeling of God to people who are completely outside the way of divine life?

The preliminary groundwork will have to be done by a number of people who have realized this divinity in their own life. That will be the first step. In this century, we have not had such people with the capacity to inspire others to lead a divine life. There have been many preachers, and they did speak about God, but it has not been enough. Unless He is in me and works through me, it is not enough.

Secondly, the people of this century have been scientifically minded, and in the next century they will be the same. It is the scientists who will work, not only in education, but on many other fronts. God realized saints, on one side, and scientists, on the other, will have to work together. This century was the century of technology; the next will be the century of bhakti. Scientists have worked on it in this century, and they will continue to work on it in the next century as well, because bhakti is not only a philosophy or a religion. Bhakti is a science, which can transform the individual and change his thinking pattern. So, let us wait for the next century.

I would like to know a way to love people.

Your question is very nice. The point is very simple. Today, everybody wants to give love to others, but no one has enough love to give. You want to distribute love to everybody, to your neighbour, your friends, the people all around, but you do not have much of it. Love is also a philosophy, an idea. I may think that I can distribute love like I can distribute money or food. I can give children to all the people who do not have children. I can give money to those who do not have money. I may think it is a very good idea, but when I come face to face with the reality, I find that I do not actually have much money, love or food. Kabir has said about love:

*That which ascends and descends in a moment,
That is not true love, my dear.
Only that love which does not diminish,
But remains constant, deserves to be called love.
Anyone may say, this is love, that is love,
But no one fully knows.
That which remains all the twenty-four hours,
That alone is true love.
Where there is love, there are no rules,
Nor is intellect required.
When the mind is full of love
Who cares about days and dates?*

Therefore, before you try to give love to others, you should have a Bholenath Readymade Store. I have a dog whose name is Bholenath and I have consecrated everything to him, because he is very lucky. You should always consecrate your things to someone who is lucky. If your wife is lucky, consecrate everything to her. If your dog is lucky, consecrate everything to your dog. If your servant is lucky, consecrate everything to him. I found Bholenath was very lucky, so I consecrated everything to him. Bholenath Readymade means a store which is always full of clothes, cricket balls, bats, hockey sticks, tennis raquets, children's games, cycles, cows, bulls. Anything anybody wants, Bholenath's Store can manage! It is never empty. My dog's

store is always full! The more you expend, the more it is filled! This is not a joke; it is an example which I am giving you.

You have to develop love within you, but love does not grow without facing hatred, jealousy, greed, selfishness and mean-mindedness. You have to confront those negative aspects if you are going to climb up towards love. At different points you will encounter these rascals, these *rakshasas*: Miss Jealousy, Mr Arrogance, Mrs Selfishness. They have their quarters, and when you go there, they talk to you very nicely. You are going in search of love, but you may stay with jealousy for a lifetime. Suddenly, one day, you realize, "Oh God! I was going for love, but I am with jealousy!" By then, however, you are old and cannot climb any more.

*Separated from her lover,
The beloved sobs day and night,
With an aching heart.
As Dadu says, now the opportunity is lost.
She could not love him when he was with her.*

What exactly is love?

When you speak of love, it is a very vague idea. Love is the feeling of oneness with others, to feel for others as you feel for yourself; to be able to feel the difficulty of another person as you feel your own. That is one expression of love. Therefore, in love, duality is fused into unity, two become one. Sometimes emotions come and take the form of love. It is very important to know this. There is a clear cut distinction between love and emotion; they are two different substances completely. They belong to two totally different castes, but they look almost alike. What you have been talking about was really emotion.

Love requires a lot of sacrifices from you: your comforts, your idiosyncrasies, your ego, your money, your life, everything. In love, there is just giving and not taking. Love is an act of giving, and giving, and giving, and giving, and giving, and not taking. Kahlil Gibran says:

*I fell in deep love with the world
And the world also behaved in the same way.
That's why all my smiles were on their lips
And all their tears were in my eyes.*

Mahatma Gandhi has also said:

*Love never demands, it always gives.
Love always bears, it never grieves.
It is never fretful,
Nor does it take revenge.*

A lover gives love. Do you know the story of Romeo and Juliet? We also have Laila and Majnu, an Iranian story. In love you give, you do not expect anything in return. When you expect something in return, it is not love; it is something else. To attain love, you have to purify your mind and undergo a lot of experiences in life. That is only possible when you are a pilgrim, when you are searching for God.

What were some of your earlier spiritual experiences?

At the age of six, I had an experience where I saw the body as I see it now, but I did not feel it as I feel it now. It would be difficult for you to understand what I mean. It was as if the whole body had been anesthetized, except for the eyes. I could see, but I did not feel anything. At that age, I felt a little terrified, so my parents took me to doctors, sadhus and mullas, to tombs and temples. It was fortunate that, in those days, we did not have lunatic asylums in India, otherwise, I would have been in one by now, and not here! These are the symptoms of a lunatic, one who can see his body, but does not feel it. After some time, this experience went away.

Once a swami suggested that it was a spiritual experience. So, I began to think about what that experience could be. Was it a disease? Then I read the books of Swami Vivekananda and other spiritual people, and I came to understand that this experience signified an awakening of my spirit. Then I thought, "How can I have that experience at will?" That was how I came

to know that there was God, otherwise I never thought about God at all.

In the last few years, I have undergone a lot of change. I witness it, I see it, and it is taking place on its own. I am only the seer. My mind is changing. I am passing through a state of God awareness, devotion to God, thinking of Him. This has come to me spontaneously. I use the words that have been given to me. The present way of thinking and feeling have been given to me. Therefore, if you want to go into spiritual life, or the life of God, it is only He who can do it. Without His wish, nothing can happen. This song of Rabindranath Tagore touches our mind and our hearts intimately:

*He Himself has entered my house.
He lives in my house day and night.
In the morning, the light of His laughter fills my house.
The whole house is delighted by His smile.
He sits alone in my house.
When I go out on my business,
He comes to the door to bid me goodbye.
When I return home in the evening,
I find Him sitting alone in the house.
When I am asleep on my bed, forgetting everything,
He alone remains awake in the house.
Sometimes in slumber and sometimes in dream,
He comes and goes, and keeps on laughing,
Even in the darkness of my house.*

Do you think that sadhana will help to open this door?

I do not think sadhana works here. Sadhana is necessary for the human body, mind and emotions. Asana, pranayama and meditation are necessary for a balanced life. But where awareness of God, continuous remembrance of Him, and realization of the divine light are concerned, these will happen only if He wants it. If He does not want it, it will not happen, even if you work for hundreds and hundreds of years. It is only through the grace of God, that you find God. About divine grace, the *Narada Bhakti Sutras* (38) says:

*Success in devotion is attained
Chiefly by the grace
Of enlightened sages and saints,
As well as by a trace of divine grace.*

I do not know how to attract God's grace. You have to find that out for yourself.

Christ wanted to give love; Buddha wanted to give love; every saint and prophet wanted to give love. But what happened? What did their disciples do? Did they distribute love? No, they distributed religion, they did not give love. They created nations and institutions, but that is not love.

Are Lord Shankara and Shankaracharya the same?

Shankaracharya was a boy who was born in the south-western tip of India eleven or twelve hundred years ago. He came from a very scholarly family of that area. His father was a very great teacher of the Vedas, Sanskrit philosophy and so forth. At a very early age, he left home and went to central India. He found his guru on the banks of the Narmada river, at a place called Omkareshwar. His guru's name was Govindapada. He stayed there for sometime and had his first initiations from him.

After finishing his learning, he went to the Himalayan region, up towards Badrinath. There he lived in a cave and wrote commentaries on all the Upanishads. All his writings are respected, venerated and accepted as extremely systematic, philosophical analysis. They are considered to be the best works by all standards. Shankaracharya was a great philosopher. He was the founder of the philosophy called *Advaita Vedanta*, which is qualified monism. Shankaracharya did not propound a religion of his own. He said that the Vedas are the ultimate truth, and his commentaries, explanations and notes were based on what was in the Vedas. He did not comment on his own ideas. It was not his personal view, but the view of the Vedas.

He was also a great yogi. He went to Badrinath and Kedar-nath, the ultimate Himalayan mountain. Then he returned

to the south once again, after which he went to Kashmir. The king of Kashmir accepted him as his guru and gave him all his support. Then Shankaracharya traversed the length and breadth of this country and met all the scholars. It seems that during this period there were many great scholars in this country. So, if one had something to say to the common masses, one had to first of all convince the scholars. If they were convinced, well and good, but if they were not, the masses would not listen. That is true in India even today. Indians always say “yes” to everything, but they believe only what they think is right. This trait comes through a particular system. The scholars were convinced by what Shankaracharya said.

He died at the age of thirty-two. In his lifetime, he established four seats for his tradition of thought. One is in southern India, in Sringeri near Bangalore; the second is at the western tip of India, in Dwarka; the third is at the eastern tip of India, in Puri; and the fourth is in the north, near Badrinath. There were four seats, as you have in the Vatican, and those who sit there are called Jagat gurus. They function well even today. I belong to the southern seat. I live in the north, but the seat of my philosophy is in the south at Bangalore. That is where my tradition comes from.

In the Indian trinity, Shiva is also known as Shankara. The trinity consists of the creator, Brahma; the preserver, Vishnu or Narayana; and the destroyer, Shiva or Shankara. These are the three aspects of the universal nature. They are not really three, they are essentially one and the same. However, in order to explain them, we say that these aspects are realities. Just as catabolism and anabolism are inherent in metabolism, these three aspects are inherent in the universal principle, the universal process.

Shiva is sometimes depicted with matted locks, and sometimes without. Sometimes he is symbolized in the form of a *shivalingam*, an oval shaped black stone. He has influenced the thinking of this country tremendously, and it is through him that yoga emerged. They say that Shiva was the first yogi and teacher of yoga, and that it is from him that tantra has also come. Shiva was the first teacher of tantra. He instructed

Parvati, his consort, on yoga, tantra, medicine and many other aspects.

Shiva, or Shankara, has two aspects. One is the universal aspect, in which Shiva is a force, not a person. But if that force incarnates in some form, for example, in my form, you will say that Shiva had a beard, that he was from this place or that place, that he was five feet two inches tall and spoke English and Hindi. When the electric current manifests through a bulb, it is light. When it manifests through a refrigerator, it is cold. When it manifests through this microphone, it is sound. Is electricity sound, light or temperature? No, it is energy and energy is always neutral. It has no particular form of its own. *Shakti*, or energy, has no particular form of its own. But all forms are the forms of energy. Light and refrigeration are forms of energy.

In the same way, Shiva was born once upon a time in this country in the form of a mendicant. He had a human body and he lived the life of a heretic. He used to put cobras around his neck, drink poison and smoke hashish. At the time, perhaps the government did not know about hashish.

Shiva is the eternal destroyer, which is one of the universal aspects of creation. If there were no destroyer, there would be no creation. Destruction and creation must be balanced by each other. So, creation, preservation and destruction, this is the trinity, and it is beautifully explained in the vedic stories. Similarly, there is a trinity in all religions.

Shiva, Shankara, Mahadeva, there are so many names of Shiva. In India, the Shaivite philosophy has two seats, one in Kashmir and another in South India, where they have the southern Shaiva tradition. In Kashmir, it is known as the Kashmir Shaiva philosophy. Very great books have been written there and many Western scholars come to study Shaivism, the cult of Shiva.

*I bow down to Shiva and Parvati,
Who have united and taken one form.
I bow down to the daughter of the mountain king
And also to Shiva who has the bull on His flag.*

*I bow down to Shankara and Parvati,
Who celebrate each moment charmingly.
I bow down to them who are givers of desired boons.
I bow down to the wooden sandal worshipped by Narayana.*

*I bow down to Shankara and Parvati,
Riding on the bull
Worshipped well by Brahma and Vishnu.
I bow down to Them who are smeared with ashes
And sandal paste.
I bow down to Shankara and Parvati again.*

Satsang 17

November 25, 1994, Afternoon

What is vamachara?

People do not believe that the sexual act is very important in tantra, because in many religions this relationship is considered to be very bad. It is looked down upon as a sin. So, how can an act of sin be an act of awakening? Mankind is not able to reconcile this doubt, and I do not think there will ever be a compromise. Even in modern society, where free sex is not considered to be a crime, at some point in life, they think it is not good and feel guilty about it. Therefore, this being the most important point in married life, one must think about it properly. There are many other aspects of married life which you have to consider also in order to make it very successful.

Vama means 'left', *achara* means 'practice', so *vamachara* means 'the left practice', or 'the practice with the left'. Now, what is the meaning of left? In India, the place of the wife is always on the left side. If any lady comes to meet me, she will have to sit on my right side, not on my left. Only the wife has the right to sit on the left. So, any practice with one's wife is *vamachara*. It is not a left-handed practice, as they translate it in English. There are many words used in Sanskrit for wife, and *vama* is one of them. It is also known as *vama marga*, the path with your wife.

Now, this is one relationship which dharma accepts only if it takes place between you and your wife. If this relationship takes place between you and somebody else, dharma may

not say anything, but it will not accept it. In India, we keep quiet, but in some places they would kill you. According to all dharmas, all great religions: Christian, Islam, Hindu, Vedic, Buddhist, Jain, Zoroastrian, the sexual act must be limited to the marital relationship. If it happens elsewhere, it is not accepted. If the sexual relationship between husband and wife is properly attuned, properly aimed and properly performed, it can awaken the spiritual force in mooladhara chakra. That is vamachara.

Drugs are a big problem in the West. What can be done about this?

Some things are going on in the West, whether in England, Switzerland, France, Greece, America, Australia or Canada, that are not good signs for the future. Powerful civilizations which once existed in Egypt, Rome, Greece, India and China, just disappeared in the past. How did they disappear? Our generation must think very clearly about the reasons.

Drugs are everywhere. Even children are taking them and discovering they make them feel good. They want to feel nice, they want to feel transcendental, because their whole life is restless. They were born from restless intercourse, and they were brought up in restless environments. Now, they are so restless that without drugs they cannot feel good. Even if such a child were my son, he would do the same thing.

Therefore, Western thinkers, philosophers and social scientists must rethink this problem now. In order to do this, they need to imbibe certain ideas from Indian culture. India may not be able to offer the world a very sophisticated technology, but she can give a much safer social system. It is the society, the culture, which ultimately destroys a political system. In the very affluent Western countries, like America or Europe, if things are allowed to continue as they are at present, the prosperity may continue, but there is no guarantee for their survival.

Politicians want to control everything through law and legislation, but this is not possible. If they find you using drugs, they just put you in jail. That is all they do, but it is

not a solution. After all, in India we do not use hashish much, although it is grown here, and we are not restricted from using it. If I want to, I can take it today in front of a police officer. He can do nothing to me, because there is no law against it. It is free. Many people from the West come to India and purchase hashish to take back to their country, because it is freely available.

On certain occasions, such as Shivaratri and Holi, Indians crush marijuana leaves and add many nice things like rose petals, poppy seeds, saffron, milk and honey. They make a cool beverage called *thandai*, which is nicer than coca cola. Everybody drinks it, and they get a little bit funny. The whole family drinks it together and they start laughing and laughing. But that just happens on one day.

Then we have balls of marijuana leaves with many other things added, called *bhang*, which are made to offer to the Lord. You are allowed to take it, but not in order to overcome your restlessness. It is a part of the religious ceremony. We use these things on Holi or Shivaratri, but not at every festival. Sadhus, mahatmas and vairagis build a fireplace wherever they go, and call out to anybody from the village, "Get me a chillum." The pipe for holding the marijuana is called a *chillum*. A number of them sit down together and smoke chillums, bidis, cigarettes, drink tea, sing kirtan, bhajan and then sleep. In the West, this would not be allowed.

Alcohol is a very big industry in the West. The people who make alcohol are millionaires. If you want to drink champagne, it is costly, but one cigarette costs very little. That is another reason these drugs have become so popular in the West; they are cheaply available to the poorer sections of society. Instead of drinking scotch, they just have a cigarette. When you take alcohol, there is stimulation, but when you smoke ganja there is relaxation. The effects of these two drugs are different.

A culture which ignores the very basis of a good society, which is a sound social system, is sure to undergo a very dark period. I don't see any silver linings, unless some miracle takes place. Think about it. A society which has not produced

even one prophet, what future course will it take? That is the problem. Moses was from the East, Christ was from the East and Buddha was from the East. Many of the great thinkers, philosophers and scientists of the West were executed in the last few centuries. Someone will have to work at it in a big way. The drug problem is just on the fringe, but we are aware of it, we have the statistics.

What is it like to be devoted to God?

It is not possible for me to talk about God whenever you like. I can talk about God only when I am inspired, so, you will just have to wait. God is not an academic subject where you start talking about epistemology, the theory of knowledge, and so on. How can one talk of love all the time? Can you write poetry whenever you like? You cannot write it all the time. There are moments when the poetry flows from within.

Could you speak about the third level of sexual union? This is something that interests us very much.

You see, unless society and religion as a whole accept the divinity of the sexual act, there is no use talking about it. Christianity criticizes it, Islam criticizes it, Buddhism criticizes it, Jainism criticizes it. They say it is a sin and do not talk about it, although everybody is involved in it. In this country, it is a very touchy subject. Even a husband and wife have to talk about it very carefully. This relationship is natural and nature is always in chaos. Therefore, there have to be rules, regulations, systems and customs which should restrain the sexual behaviour of man.

I would like your blessing on the spiritual path which I am planning to follow.

I think on the spiritual path there are two important aspects. One is yourself and the other is God. There is no third aspect. That is what I also consider in my life: first, myself, I have to struggle, I have to strive, and then God and His blessings.

**Swamiji, in spiritual life I think I have lost my direction.
Please give me guidance.**

Spiritual life is very difficult. Very few people can make it. If spiritual life was easy, then thousands and thousands would have reached the pinnacle of spiritual life, but nobody has. Everybody should try on his own. Sometimes God will be gracious to you. Who knows?

*Sometimes God, out of mercy,
And without any reason for His affection,
Bestows a human body on someone.
The body of a man is like a ship,
Crossing the ocean of the world,
And the grace of God becomes a favourable wind.*

Please give us some advice.

Advice on what? I stopped giving advice when I came here, because that is a part of my spiritual life. One who enters the order of paramahansa should not make disciples, should not act as a guru, should not give advice, should not share anyone's karma. He should not even meet people. There are four stages of sannyasa: kutichak, bahudak, hamsa and paramahansa. In *kutichak*, the sannyasin has a guru. In *bahudak*, he wanders and goes to people's doors for bhiksha. In *hamsa*, he opens an ashram, or mandir, or hospital and gives mantra diksha, guidance and good advice. Then finally, he enters the *paramahansa avastha*, where he has nothing to do with anyone. Therefore, I don't give advice, because my mind doesn't work like that anymore.

You people have come, so I talk, because I have to entertain you. It is entertainment. In spiritual life, a disciple should not keep hanging on to guru for a lifetime. It is not right. We have bad habits. We want our children, even if they are grown up and married with children, to always hold our hands and do what we say. This hanging on, this moha business, does not work with paramahamsas. It did not work with me even when I was in Munger, and now it does not work at all.

I do not care if anybody gets angry with me. If they do not come again, so much the better. I have called everybody here for one simple reason. Every day people have been coming and knocking on my door at any time of the day and night. For the last four years, people have slept outside my gate on the road. Some people even scaled the walls. Some went to the next door neighbour and tried to look in from the roof. So, I thought, once and for all, let me meet all of them and tell them the facts.

Rabindranath Tagore has said:

*Friends, at this time of departing,
Wish me good luck.
The red colour of the dawn
Is spreading in the sky,
And my path is very pleasant.
Do not ask about provisions for the journey.
Empty handed,
But with a heart full of hope,
I have started my journey.
There are dangers on the way,
Still I am fearless.*

In this world, every man has to walk alone. Our parents carry us for some period of our life. They keep us in their laps, nourish us, give us food and education. But then we have to walk on our own two feet. A son who holds on forever to his parents can never find his own path. When you enter spiritual life, you have to walk absolutely alone. Here, one has no companion, no husband, not even the body, only the atma. You pick up someone whom you think can guide you and get direction from him.

*Either love God,
Or ask those who love God about God.
Do not destroy yourself by following
Those who do not know the value of love.*

But as far as I am concerned, after this month my door will be closed to everyone. One day I am going to leave this world,

so what is the fun in meeting all of you? I have to fulfil my own promises which I made to my guru and to myself. Kabir says:

*O sage, it is you who is responsible for this love.
I was sleeping in my home peacefully,
You awoke me by your words.
I was drowning in the ocean of the world,
O sage, it is you who made me understand,
By holding my hands.
There is only one word, not two.
O sage, you made me free from the fetters.
Kabir says, listen O wise sage,
It is you who joined the prana to the prana.*

It says in the *Bhagavad Gita* that non-action is action, so what is your action just now?

Non-action is action when one is in active life. But when you have renounced life, then these rules of the *Bhagavad Gita* no longer apply. The *Bhagavad Gita* relates to an active person who is dealing with the problems of life, family and society. It does not concern me at all. For me, the *Bhagavad Gita* is irrelevant, and I do not believe that any path can take me further except that of bhakti yoga. Action, inaction; they are all a jugglery of words and expressions. The essential thing is love, devotion, merging of the mind, awareness of God all the time, not thinking of anybody else, not thinking of friends, not thinking of disciples. It has been said in the *Narada Bhakti Sutras* (25–26):

*Divine love is even greater
Than the yoga of action,
The yoga of wisdom
And the yoga of meditation.
For it is their excellent fruition.*

In *Ramacharitamanas*, Shiva says to Parvati:

*O Parvati,
Rama does not bless one with His grace,*

*Because of performance of yoga, japa,
Austerities, rituals and yajna.
It comes on account of love,
Love for Him and Him alone.*

Why not think about the world?

Why? What for? Romeo and Juliet could forget themselves, and they were worldly lovers. Romeo and Juliet, Laila and Majnu, they could just forget everything else in each other, and they were not aware of what was happening outside.

*I have come hither to drown myself
In the river of love.
And there, the world is calling me,
Bewildered from the shore.*

When love becomes intense, when passion becomes intense, the world does not exist for you, or for anyone. Did the world exist for Laila and Majnu? No. Similarly, the world does not exist for those in love with God. For them, there are no children, brothers or sisters. Such things are useless. The traditional method of doing pooja is a different thing. In prem bhakti, the attitude is exactly like that between Laila and Majnu or Romeo and Juliet. The Gopis of Vraja said to Uddhava:

*O Uddho, we do not number ten or twenty minds.
There was only one which went with Lord Krishna.
Now, there is none to worship God,
We have all become as lifeless,
As a body without a head.
In the hope of seeing Krishna,
Our last breath is waiting,
And can do so for millions of years.
You are the friend of the charming Krishna,
Who is the master of the whole world.
Surdas implores, let God
Fulfil the desires of the beloved.*

What is the quality of the love between guru and disciple?

If you have to reach somewhere on the spiritual path, the guru is necessary. He is the stepping stone. But I do not believe that the guru can carry you all the way to the goal. I have never propagated this concept either. No doubt, the guru is important to begin with. To reach the roof, you need the ladder. In spiritual life too, you need a ladder. But if you keep holding the guru's hand and tell yourself, he will take you ahead, it is not possible to reach anywhere. Only if God showers His blessings on you, can you get through. In the *Kathopanishad* (1:3:14) it is said:

*Rise up, be awake,
Go to the great sages and know about Brahman.
Wise persons say that
The path of knowledge is like a sharp blade,
And very difficult to walk on.*

The rituals performed by worldly people are all right, but love depends on sincerity, not on rites. Only bowing the head is not prayer.

How can we reinforce the passion that we feel for God and make it stronger?

Passion is a mutilated form of bhakti. When your emotions go the wrong way, it is eros, *vasana*. When they go the right way, it is bhakti.

How can we create bhakti, the great love for God?

You can't create it. You have to be in touch through satsang all the time. Without satsang, bhakti is not possible. *Satsang* means being in the company of saints. In *Ramacharitamanas*, Kakabhushundi says to Garuda:

*O my Lord, I firmly believe
That the servant of Rama is superior to Rama.
Rama is the ocean
And pious persons with firm minds are clouds.
Hari is the sandal tree*

*And the saints are the winds.
 The result of man's performances
 Is divine love which is unobtainable
 Without the help of saints.
 Having this thought in mind,
 Whoever engages himself in satsang,
 O great bird, easily attains devotion to Rama.
 Brahma is the ocean of milk.
 The saints are like the gods,
 Who churn it with the Mandara mountain of knowledge,
 And extract the butter
 In the form of Rama's epic,
 Which is full of the sweetness of devotion.
 O King of birds, think over it.
 One who has the shield of non-attachment
 And sword of knowledge
 Attains the victory of devotion to Hari,
 After killing the enemies of ego, greed and delusion.*

How can I become a better person?

Do a little bhajan and kirtan. First bhajan and then kirtan. Always pray to God, He will guide you. Man comes into life only for a short time, either as a guru or as a teacher. Nothing will work if God does not wish it. I don't know of any way to influence Him. I have no approach. If I am able to get that approach, I will help you later.

Again, Kakabhushundi says to Garuda:

*O enemy of serpents,
 No one can cross the ocean of the world
 Without the attitude of master and servant.
 With this thought in your mind,
 Remember the lotus feet of Rama.
 Blessed are those who remember Rama,
 Who is capable of transforming
 The animate into the inanimate.*

It has also been said in the *Narada Bhakti Sutras*:

*By merging the trinity of love, lover
And beloved into one,
A devotee should incessantly practise
Love and love alone,
Like a devoted servant or devoted wife.*

Satsang 18

November 26, 1994

Can you teach us something about tantra?

I have never taught tantra. I have only spoken about it. Teaching tantra is not permitted in the tradition. Tantra has to be learned from a lady, not from a man. The tantric guru is always female, the incarnation or symbol of Shakti.

So many people have come here from all over the world to meet you. Isn't it time to bring out a book to let people know about your message and your work?

You see, this particular congregation has only one purpose. I have decided once and for all to tell the people that they have to be a light unto themselves. You have to be a light unto yourself. It is of no use knocking at my door. The most innocent person, who does not know the ABC of spiritual training, can get realization at any time, if he wishes. No qualifications are required. You do not have to be truthful, celibate or sincere. You do not have to be Christian or Hindu, or put on a sacred thread.

Darshan of God can be had by anyone, anytime, anywhere. For God's grace, you do not have to qualify yourself. Many great, truthful, honest and pure people have missed the bus.

Rama himself says in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*Now, listen to what I say,
Which is highly pure, true and simple,*

*As has been described in the Vedas.
I am telling you of my principles.
Listen and bear them in mind.
And remember me, abandoning all else.
This world has been created by my illusion,
Along with all the beings, sentient and insentient.
They are all of different categories.
Among them are the twice born,
And among the twice born
Are those who know the Vedas.
Among them also are those who live
According to the Vedas and dharma.
Even among those who are detached and wise,
The specially wise are dearer to me.
But my servants, who have no hope
Except in me, are dearest to me.
I tell you truly, again and again,
That no one is dearer to me than my devotees.*

He who has the heart of a child receives God's love. God's grace is for the one who is simple as a child, who considers toys to be real, the moon to be cheese, who marries his dolls and starts crying when one doll is broken. God's grace is for those with childlike innocence. God is not a matter of intellect. On that basis, you will fail for centuries, for thousands of lives. God is captivated by *bhavana*, feelings.

This is not the *bhavana* of an academic or an intellectual person. It is the feeling you have when you throw away all your superiority and ego, and say, "I am not an academic, a scientist, an author, a teacher of so many disciples, a mahant, or a pontiff. No, I am nothing!" Who am I? Five feet two inches tall – one heart attack and Hari Om Tāt Sat! A man digs after falling from a rickshaw, yet he thinks he is great. He is so egoistic, so full of pride and vanity! One may engage his vanity before others, but he has to go like a child, without any clothes, before God. And I don't mean that you leave your pants off. The Lord Himself has said:

*O sage, listen to Me.
I am telling the truth firmly.
Those who remember me,
Abandoning all supports,
I care for them always in the same manner
As a mother cares for her children.*

The best example is that of the Gopis. Once Lord Krishna was playing; he must have been eight or ten years old. The Gopis, the cowherd girls, were bathing in a lake and their clothes were lying on the ground. Krishna collected all their clothes and climbed up a tree. When they came out of the water and did not find anything to change into, they said, "Give us our clothes!" He answered, "Come as you are and get them!" They said, "How can we come?" He replied, "You won't come without your clothes, but you say you are close to me. Funny!" Then they came to him as they were and he gave them their clothes. That is called taking away the masks of life. It has been said in *Srimad Bhagavata*:

*If you consider yourself my devotees,
Then do as I say. Come here and take off your clothes.
They came to Him with pure smiles.
When they came near Him in that state,
The Lord became pleased with their purity of mind.
Putting their clothes on their shoulders,
He smiled at them lovingly and said:
Just as cooked seeds do not germinate,
Desires are not able to distract or form attachments
For those who have surrendered unto Me.*

The Lord's grace is easy to receive, but so far in history, only the very innocent people, like Mirabai, Christ, Raidas, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, have obtained it. Christ was not intellectual. He did not know what was ahead of him. Become simple-hearted like a child, and then you will receive God's blessings. If you think that becoming a tyagi, a tapasvi, being charitable and dharmic is the way to God, you may find you are wrong.

Firstly, God can be reached only by love. There is no other way. Secondly, God will meet you only if He wishes, not by your wish. You must remember this. God is approachable only through love and devotion. He will reveal Himself only if He wants to, not because you have tried all the methods.

*Rama is so soft-hearted
And kind to the poor;
That He shows mercy
Even without being asked for it.*

There is no method. All the methods written about in the Bible, the *Bhagavad Gita* and Upanishads are just said because we have to do something. But actually, nothing except bhakti is necessary in order to find God.

*Say, what is the nature of the Lord
That He has so much affection
And love for His servants?*

After years and years of searching and hard work, I have discovered my relationship with God. Yes, I have discovered who He is to me and who am I to Him. This has been the major accomplishment of my being in Rikhia, and it was very gratifying to find it.

*All say that the Lord is mine,
Peculiar is the relation
Between God and His devotee.*

This is how it happened. One day I was explaining to somebody that Rama asked Hanuman, "What is the relationship between us?" Hanuman replied: "From the physical point of view, I am your servant. From the spiritual point of view, I am a part of you. But as far as reality is concerned, you and I are one." "That's it!" I told myself.

The duty of a servant, *sevak dharma*, is to do what the master orders. If he asks you to sweep the filth, you must do it. A servant does not have a choice of his own. If He asks me to do japa, I will do it. If He asks me to do pooja to tulsi, I will do it. If He asks me to leave Rikhia, I will go. I have

made up my mind that I will do all that He asks me. Now, I have discovered my relationship with God, and it fits my personality exactly. Now, life is an expression of service for Him. Kabir has said:

*A servant is one who serves always.
Kabir says that without service,
One can never be a servant.
If he serves with some hope,
Every day he will test Rama.
Kabir says that he is not a servant,
For he charges four times his wages.
The servant and the master should be of one mind.
The view of the servant should merge
With that of the master.
The Lord is not pleased with cunning.
He is pleased with the emotion of the mind.
In the store of the Lord,
There is no shortage.
If the devotees do not get their desires,
Their service is at fault.
O devotee, what is not there for you?
The Lord Rama is looking after you.
Riddhi and siddhi are always ready to serve,
And liberation also does not abandon you.*

Whatever He says, I will do. He will say what is necessary. If He says that He will give me grace and tear asunder all the seven curtains, so that I may see the eternal light and become one with Him, or if He makes me become a lunatic, it is all right. There is no harm in being a lunatic for God. If God possesses your mind to the extent that you do not recognize anyone or care whether you eat or not, that is bliss!

Of what use is it to recognize all and sundry, if you do not recognize God? To know all about someone by name, place and profession is useless. The purpose of my life is not to know this man from Greece or that man from Canada, England or Deoghar. That is incidental. We are all fellow travellers, meeting on a railway platform, and nobody has

any real relationship with anybody else. We only have one link and that is with God. This is true for everyone. The relationships of mother, father, brother, sister, and social relationships, are for the dealings of the world. The real relationship is only with God.

The simple person, who does not use his head too much, finds God very soon. God gives darshan easily to people who have the heart of a child. Those who are adult at heart, who are very intellectual and talk about the shastras and knowledge, do not reach God. It is not even essential to be a good person to reach God. It becomes essential to be good for social reasons, otherwise there would be riots and terrorism. To get to God, it is simply necessary to learn to love. That is all.

Only Rama knows the ethics of love.

Leaving aside all the relations

Rama always prefers the relation of love.

Do you think education is necessary for girls?

People say girls should be educated, but no one considers the difficulties they face in their studies. Therefore, many girls abandon their studies and do not graduate. If a girl from here goes to college ten or fifteen kilometres away from home and has no means of transportation, we give her a bicycle, so that she can study. She belongs to a backward class and so it will be good if she graduates. A few more good people will be added to our society, otherwise hooliganism will continue to increase.

Do you think that sadhus and sannyasins should maintain indifference towards political and social issues?

As politics are concerned, sadhus and sannyasins have a different viewpoint altogether. It is not based on principles, but on each individual case. We also know that there are no absolutes in politics. Everything is relative. If you say that you are right, you are right in a relative way. No political system is absolute. The most essential need is that the country must have peace.

If it does not have peace, business will not prosper and the lot of the poor will not improve, which means that the country will not be prosperous. In most houses, brothers quarrel, file court cases and murder each other. This is always happening. Do you find hooliganism happening between strangers? It happens only between brothers and acquaintances, just like the Kauravas and Pandavas.

Therefore, it has been my philosophy that sadhus and mahatmas should not be indifferent towards the social and political problems of the country. They should try to solve them in an intelligent manner, keeping in mind the national interest and dharma. The country cannot live only for religion. Today, the nation is more important than religion. Previously, religion was more important than nationalism. Now, the nation comes first, but a nation has a limited scope. It is a crowd of people. Kalidasa described India as stretching from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari. Himalaya is like a standard of measurement for the whole earth.

Who is responsible for the implementation of yoga in Indian schools?

The credit for the implementation of yoga in Indian schools goes to a lady from France, who started an institute called RYE – Research on Yoga in Education. She has done extensive research on applied yoga in schools, the effects of yoga on children's behaviour, diet, mischief-making, study and performance. Our books were used as textbooks for the studies that were conducted. The research of this institute is now of international repute and it has branches even in countries like China and Japan. Studies were also conducted and yoga introduced in hospitals and universities.

Various agencies in India, such as the Education Department, were influenced by this research and started implementing it here. There is a tendency in India to import things from the West and then try them. The quality is also good, but not good enough, because yoga is our heritage. It was born here, and its entire philosophy is compatible with the environment of this country. In foreign countries,

if somebody wants to become vegetarian, it becomes a headache for the whole family. They will be asked endlessly, “Why don’t you eat meat and fish?” It is not so here. The climate here is also favourable for yoga, neither too cold nor too hot.

Why is it that many of our traditions have been taken up in foreign countries while we are still under foreign influence and, in many cases, still not able to fully appreciate and acknowledge the value of our own culture?

When foreign countries invaded India, they imposed their views. They had the full power of the state, so whatever they said had to be right. Foreign influence has been fully imbibed in our political and national life, and fully integrated into our family systems, into the lives of our men, women and children, and into our marriage customs. So now, it is difficult to separate these influences from our own traditions, and society would break up if we tried. Our history would end, because no one caste can have eternal supremacy over the world. History is a witness to this.

The Egyptians ruled the world for some time, then the Greeks, the Persians and the Romans followed. The Aryans and the Shaka people came and went. These transitions are normal. Power centres keep on changing. When Ashoka came to power, he gave us Buddhism and the concept of non-violence. Meat eating had to stop and, therefore, the Vaishnava dharma flourished. When Islam came, it struck a blow at untouchability and idol worship, and the contemporary religion of India was in danger. Therefore, Adi Shankaracharya had to start a similar, contemporary philosophy in the form of Advaita Vedanta. Shankaracharya said that paramatma is *nirguna*, nameless and formless, which is written in the Vedas.

Other cultures also had a big influence on Indian tradition. In fact, not only in India, but throughout the whole world, society, civilization and culture are just one big khichari. You cannot say any one culture is pure. Today, in England, do they follow the Anglo Saxon traditions? No, the English have

lived in Malta, in India and in many other countries, and have imbibed those influences, so they are no longer pure Anglo Saxon. Similarly, we are no longer pure Indian. We are proud of Shivaji, but where do you draw the line? To destroy an empire is not greatness. To create continuity from that empire to something else with a smooth transition is the capacity of a good politician or statesman.

The kings used to have history recorded and chronicled, but the people did not accept it, because they would only accept those events which they felt were recorded correctly. If you suddenly change a text book, the children will not accept the new teachings. They will say that this cannot be true. If the main power is destroyed, there will be a vacuum. This is an issue that statesmen need to reflect upon. The people who are running after power do not think about it, because their attitude is only to acquire power. But no one nation is that important, and these power hungry people are insignificant.

In this world, billions of people like you and me are being born and are dying. We are insignificant insects. Nevertheless, the existence of a nation is a fact, and we have to watch carefully. This is my vision. I have always felt that at the time of the downfall of any nation or any power, continuity has to be maintained. Why has Sanatana dharma survived for so many years while other religions have disappeared? Because there has been no break in its transmission. Secondly, when the circumstances demanded that certain traditional patterns be changed, Sanatana dharma changed them.

When different religions came to power and removed the tika from the forehead, or cut off the shikha, it was agreed that removing these things was not adharma. Due to this trait, the Sanatana dharma still exists, because it has adapted to the changing times and circumstances. The word *sanatan* means 'continual'. Nowadays, girls wear flimsy clothes, but fifty years ago, we could not have imagined such a thing. Now, girls cut their hair short, and it is not considered as adharma to do so, neither is there any dharma in keeping the hair long.

The only point stressed in Sanatana dharma is that when you change a custom, you should make sure that it is not

against dharma. *Adharma* is that which causes wrong and sinful activities to increase in society, and *dharma* is that which is for the common good. So, while you are changing and adopting these elements from other shores, you should be mindful of one thing: that the item which you are accepting does not belong to adharma. It does not matter if your women shave their heads or go out in jeans or put on lipstick, that is not adharma. It is better that they do not do it, but still it is not adharma.

Sanatana dharma has always adapted to the circumstances; that is why it is still alive. Nobody can destroy it; this is its special quality. Other religions have become redundant, because they were opposed to change. We must think about the nation in a similar manner. There has to be continuity in national power. If there is a gap, a vacuum will be created, which is not good for the political system of any country. Two years ago, there was such a political vacuum in India. Political and social vacuums occur when the leader is weak. That is why the king has to be strong. He also has to be able to take risks. Risks have to be taken to achieve anything. Without taking a risk, you cannot reach God either.

The numerous methods of yoga are means for spiritual evolution. What about those people who haven't done any yoga practices? Can they evolve spiritually?

I do not teach yoga, and I do not talk about it. I know only one thing: when the grace of God touches you, you receive His blessings. Man should make continuous effort to receive this. There are many institutes of yoga. You can go to them if you think it is necessary, otherwise don't. Actually nothing is required in order to reach God. You only have to leave everything behind and empty your heart. You have to leave your ego, caste, religion, son, wealth, and go before Him like a child. One has to find one's relationship with God. That is difficult, but once you do it, you will find your path.

Kabir has said:

*All talk about love
But no one recognizes it.*

*Love is that which pervades
The entire twenty-four hours.
The land of Hari is far away.
No one can reach there without love,
Be he a yogi or a travelling Jain mendicant,
A sannyasi or a dervish.*

You can open your eyes by attending satsang again and again. The guru makes a bit of a breakthrough for you, but it is not correct to keep holding his hand all the time like a child. Walk with the guru up to a point and then go alone. Many people become so dependent on their guru that they ring him up to ask whether they should take codliver oil or not!

If you have ever loved anyone in this world, you will understand what I mean. If you have ever hated anyone intensely, you will also understand. It is a feeling which is extremely strong, so strong that you are constantly aware of it. No matter how much you try to forget it, you just cannot. It is like an obsession which you cannot get rid of. The feeling of love for Him need not always be like that between lovers. It can be the feeling of intense hatred as for an enemy, a hatred that overpowers your mind and keeps coming up, whether you are asleep or awake.

The relationship with God can also consist of the feelings of disgust, malice or jealousy. These are feelings, just as love and affection are. Your relationship with God may revolve around any one of these intense feelings, the one that your mentality and personality can accept. It is possible that my mentality may be different from yours. I accept myself as a servant of God, and I function in life with this viewpoint. It is possible that this may be totally incomprehensible to you.

Most people accept themselves as a bhakta of God. It is up to you to find out the way. This is the ideal path. Once man begins to be in the company of God, he rids himself of karmas accumulated through many lives. Then he receives the grace of God without even asking for it. What happens when he receives this grace? Well, that is difficult for me to say as yet. I will tell you when I receive it.

Swamiji, you gave me my sadhana years ago. Does that change now that things have changed?

Follow the path of spiritual life. Let nature take its own course. Let it be whatever it is. Why worry about these things? Why be anxious about it? It is not necessary. I believe in leaving everything to the divine. Who am I to do it? He does everything. He controls the thoughts, emotions, senses and everything. You are not doing anything. You think you are, but it is not true. Know always that you are the instrument and He is the doer, whoever He is, whatever His form is.

The pace of ashram life is so different from the outside world. How is this maintained?

In an ashram, it is necessary that there be continuity and that people move slowly. Slow and steady wins the race, not fast. You should not work on the basis of ambition, because this does not pay in the long run. Do your karma, do your duty, that is all. Life does not run on expectations. If you make expectations the basis of your life, you will have a nervous breakdown. The *Bhagavad Gita* says that you do not have any right over the fruits of your action. You should not live in expectation of results but, of course, everyone bases his life on expectation.

Are there any plans for reforestation in this area?

We are making a mini reservoir here. We have planted many saplings. We have given many more to the villagers and asked them to plant them too. We have just planted five thousand *gamhar* (poplar) and sheesham trees.

Satsang 19

November 27, 1994

Why is Deoghar called the shmashan bhoomi?

This place is Sati's burial ground. The story tells that different parts of her body fell in different places, and in the end her heart fell in this area. So, the four funeral rites were performed here. There were no rites done for the rest of her parts; it is only here that Sati's last rites were done. That is why Deoghar is known as Sati's burial ground, not Shiva's. Shiva's burial ground is Varanasi.

This is a very sacred place. It was also an ancestral home of Yogiraj Aurobindo. He is revered as a great philosopher, and as the founder of a new philosophical doctrine. He has presented Indian thought to the whole world in a very distinctive way. After escaping from Alipore jail, he reached Chandernagore, a French settlement. He again escaped from the police and came here. Now, by happy coincidence, you are all sitting in the very same area where he once visited.

Later, the circumstances forced him to go to Pondicherry. Pondicherry is not a teertha. If the circumstances had been different, he might have stayed here, because leaving this sacred spot and going to Pondicherry to do sadhana does not make sense. There are so many different cities in India, like Pune, Chennai, Bangalore, but the teerthas, like Ganga Sagar, Kashi Vishwanath, Prayag, Haridwar and Deoghar, are considered as special because the energy field of these places is different.

You know about energy fields, don't you? Electricity has an energy field; a light bulb gives light up to a certain distance.

Similarly, the sun has an energy field. Heat has an energy field, and cold has an energy field. Likewise, every place has an energy field. So, circumstances made Aurobindo leave this energy field and go to Pondicherry. Pondicherry is fortunate and, therefore, has gained importance because a great man lived there. However, in the case of Deoghar, it does not matter whether a saint stays here or not. It will forever remain a sacred place. Sati's remains are here, and her last rites were done here.

Sati is supposed to be the better half of Shiva, but she made one blunder. She had a doubt about Lord Rama. She believed that Shiva was the supreme, the ultimate, the atman. So what was the need for Him to worship Rama, who was only a mortal prince? Not only that, Lord Rama was upset when Sita was kidnapped, and he roamed about in the forest, lamenting his misfortune. So, Sati asked her Lord, how can a person who exhibits such behaviour be an *avatara*, an incarnation?

*Does that Brahman who is all pervading,
Unattached, unborn, desireless, indivisible,
Whom even the Vedas know not,
Take form and become a man
For the sake of performing the works of the gods?
Is it not surprising that even Vishnu,
The Lord of Lakshmi and the enemy of demons,
Being originally the abode of true knowledge,
Searches for his wife like an ignorant person?
The words of Lord Shiva also cannot be untrue,
Because everyone knows that He is omniscient.
Thus the mind of Sati was filled with unlimited doubts
And there was no solace in her heart.*

Sati had to suffer, because she did not repose full faith in Lord Rama. It was a little slip but, even so, she had to suffer, and all of us have to suffer as well. When Sati started having this doubt, Lord Shiva had to forsake her.

*When Shiva knew that Sati had taken the form of Sita,
 He was very much distressed at heart.
 He thought within himself that
 If He continued to treat Sati as his wife,
 The path of devotion would be lost,
 And He would thus be committing a sin.
 Although Sati was very pure
 And should not be abandoned,
 Yet, it was a great sin to love her now.
 Lord Shiva did not say anything openly,
 But He felt much grief in his heart.
 Mentally, He bowed down to the feet of Lord Rama,
 And as soon as He remembered Rama,
 This idea flashed in his mind,
 That He would not meet Sati again
 In her present form.
 Thus Lord Shiva made a resolve
 To this effect in His heart.*

From that day, Lord Rama has been worshipped in Shiva's temples and vice versa. There has been a close bond between the followers of Shiva and Narayana. Why? Because there is no difference between the devotee and the Lord. If you are a genuine devotee, you will feel no difference between yourself and the Lord. Electricity comes from a substation. The energy itself is invisible, but it manifests in the visible form as light. What is the form of energy? Light, sound and heat are all different forms of energy. Similarly, God manifests in different forms, such as Shiva, Shakti, Rama and Krishna.

Actually, God has no name. You all have given Him a name. You have been christened and stamped with such and such a name: Alka, Lakshmi, Kumar, by a priest. Similarly, we have also given God different names, according to our bhavana. But no matter what form you give to God, that form becomes true. Do not think that it is only a figment of your imagination. Some see God, reclining in the relaxed form of Vishnu, while others see God as the fierce Kali Devi.

*Kali has arched eyebrows.
Her colour is pitch black.
From her gaping mouth
Long teeth protrude.
She wields a sword,
And a stick with a skull on top.
Adorned with a garland of skulls,
Clothed in the skin of a tiger,
Mouth wide open,
Long red tongue lolling out,
Bloodshot eyes,
She appears ferocious and formidable.
Shaking wildly,
Making wrathful sounds,
She looks towards the sky.*

Tulsidas, who wrote *Ramayana*, could see God as Rama, wielding the bow and arrow. He did not imagine God as Krishna, the butter thief. When he went inside the Krishna temple at Dwarika, he said:

*How to describe Your beauty today, O Lord?
You have a peculiar form,
But unless there is a bow and arrow in Your hands,
Tulsidas cannot bow down his head.*

Each will have his own God, according to his own inclination. But you must feel total affinity and identity with whatever form appeals to you.

We now come to the next point, that of faith and trust. Man's biggest strength is not intellect; it is faith and trust. If faith and trust become solid and stable, then they switch on God's power. A lot of people are intellectual. They ask question after question: "Why is that? Why is this?" They follow mathematical logic, which does not help here. Faith and trust are not only the basis of a bhakta's life, but they form the very foundation of human life. How do you know that such and such a person is your father? What proof is there? Have you ever questioned the fact that such and such

a person is your father? Wherever there is faith and trust, there can be no question. I accept something in faith, full stop. There can be no further question. Just a drop of lime will curdle milk. The quantity of milk is irrelevant. Just a drop will suffice.

*No siddhi can be obtained
Without faith.
Without remembering Hari,
There is no hope of dissolving
The fear of this world.
Without faith, there is no devotion,
And without devotion,
Rama does not bestow His mercy.
Without the grace of Rama,
The jiva has no rest, even in dream.*

This path of faith and trust is the best path for a spiritual aspirant. It is good to study or do satsang, but no matter how much you do these things, you will not receive any grace, until your faith and trust become stable and powerful. Faith and trust awaken in places like this. It does not matter what clothes you wear, what food you eat or how you live. Nothing matters as long as you have faith and trust. However, if you do not have faith, then do not come to the spiritual path. Then you can study intellectual books and scriptures in English and Hindi. You may understand everything, but you will not experience anything unless you have faith and trust.

Do you ever think about leaving this place?

Since coming here, I have settled down. I came on the 23rd September and forgot myself here, like a person who drinks too much and forgets his wife and children and the entire world. I am like that here. Kabir has said:

*O my friend, my mind is interested in bhakti.
The happiness I feel in reciting His name
Is not to be found in riches.
You should listen to good and evil equally,*

*And pass your days in poverty.
My dwelling place is in the city of love.
I am totally happy and content.
With a bowl in one hand and a stick in the other,
I roam everywhere, the monarch of all I survey.
At last, this body will return to dust,
Then why are you behaving so proudly?
Kabir says, listen, O wise person!
The Lord is found in contentment alone.*

I like this place so much that I have forgotten everything. Of course, the best thing which has happened is that I have become relieved of karmas. You also want *nivritti*, release from karmas, but you have so many compulsions, desires and wishes that you cannot escape them, even if you want to.

*There are thousands of desires,
Each of which costs a life in itself.
Many of my pleasures have been fulfilled,
Yet, they are innumerable.*

Suppose you have a wish to be free of karma. You have money, you are physically able to sing the glory of the Lord, and your children are settled. You decide to buy a small house in a village, have a garden, and pray morning and evening to the Lord. Will you ever think of doing such a thing? No, what would happen to your grandchildren? So you get stuck.

For me, this is *ananda*, bliss, but the outside world still wants me to maintain contact. Somebody climbs the wall to have darshan. People telephone, even at odd hours, from Mumbai, Bangalore, Delhi. Hundreds of letters come. Of course, your letters do not reach me; they are all redirected to Munger. I have *nivritti* from karma and now I am very happy, in bliss. In 1989, when I came here, I cleaned away the rocks and sand. I was standing in this plot on Makar Sankranti, when I saw an enormous geru coloured snake move like lightning around the property. I lit my dhuni where I saw the snake disappear, and from that dhuni, I

lit four other fires for my panchagni sadhana inside the mandap.

Before you go you should see the mandap, because people nowadays do not know about these things. This sadhana is called panchagni tapas. *Panch* means 'five' and *agni* is 'fire'. What are the five fires? Kama, krodha, lobha, moha and mada. They are the internal fires which dehydrate the spirit, the *atma*. There are also five fires outside: one burns in each of the four directions and the sun is above. When the five fires meet, the temperature reaches sixty degrees celsius. This heat dehydrates the physical body, because after all, the body has to follow the laws of nature. There are some sadhus who can do panchagni, but not all, and some die. I had taken a sankalpa to perform this sadhana for five years.

So, what did I do? I chose my ishta devi. Every akhara has one, just like Shankaracharya had Sharadamba Devi as ishta devi for his akhara. I chose Tulsi Devi as the ishta devi for this akhara. Tulsi has all the medicine within her; she is the ultimate in purity and gentleness. I worship her every day, morning and evening. I pray to her that as long as this body is performing sadhana, keep it free of disease. The day that I lose interest in sadhana or in bhakti marga, then take this body away. This body has only one purpose, to experience God. Even if you do not see Him, at least remember Him.

*Although there was no promise,
Neither belief nor hope,
Still I had to wait for you.*

Your lover may not meet you, but even the remembrance gives you happiness. Radha and Krishna remained separate all their lives, but today they are together. What is the relationship between a devotee and the Lord? It is not one of meeting, staying together or having darshan. The most important relationship is that of remembrance; remember and maintain awareness of Him.

*The love of my master
Is established in the cage of this body.*

*So every hair of my body
Repeats His name non stop.
Dadu says that there is no one else to be remembered.*

Remember Him constantly as you would remember your enemy. You have to remember Him even while eating, drinking and sleeping. That intense emotion transforms into bhakti. In the *Narada Bhakti Sutras* (55), it is said:

*Attaining this love,
The devotee does nothing but love,
Sees nothing but love,
Hears only love,
Speaks only of love
And thinks of Love alone.*

So, five years have been completed this Kartik Sankranti. The fires have been removed. Now, from Makar Sankranti to Kartik Sankranti, I just have to sit. The temperature will be normal and the food will also be normal. During panchagni, I had to follow certain rules, even for food, but now I can eat anything except chapati.

I have planted a rudraksha tree here, and I made a sankalpa that there will be only single faced rudraksha fruit on it; the rest of the flowers will drop off. I made a sankalpa, but I do not know if it will be fulfilled. That is His will. Single faced rudraksha stays with God, with a chakravarti, or with a saint.

What is the basis of panchagni?

There is a story from the *Kathopanishad* about Vajasrava Rishi. He started giving away all his belongings. His son, Nachiketa, said to him, “Father, those cows that you are giving away are very old.” His father replied, “Yes, that is so.” Then Nachiketa asked his father, “To whom are you going to give me?” There was no reply, so Nachiketa asked again. The father got annoyed and said, “I give you unto death, to Lord Yama.”

As a result of the curse, Nachiketa went to the underworld. After waiting there for three days, he met Lord Yama. Yama

said, “You are a brahmin’s son, and you have waited for three days, so you can ask for three boons.” Nachiketa asked for two boons and for the third, he asked the answer to the following questions: What is the fire of the heavens? How does one feed it? What is its importance? Who ought to keep it? Then Yama told him about panchagni. These details are not found in the *Kathopanishad*. The entire instruction is in the Brahmana text, *Satapatha Brahmana*.

The Vedas are not one book; they are a collection of writings or literature, just like you have computer literature or science literature. The four parts of the Vedas are: Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads. The sections which are chanted by pandits during poojas are *Rigveda Samhita*, *Yajurveda Samhita*, *Samaveda Samhita* and *Atharvaveda Samhita*. Besides those, you have the Brahmanas, of which the main one is *Satapatha Brahmana*. There are stories in these books about saints, yogis, good people, debauched people, criminals, politicians; about dharma, karma and sadhana. They are thick books, full of all sorts of stories.

Are there certain precepts or traditions in Sanatana dharma which the people must always follow?

Sanatana dharma never forces a decision on anybody. It does not make a decision on dharma, because it knows that once you form a rigid rule, it is going to be broken some day. So it says that there should be no break in dharma, but there can be change. It is an ever changing flow. That is why the rishis have said that there should be no break in the tradition. If there is a break in the continuity, there will be a vacuum and then there will be anarchy, which is bad for society.

Sanatan Dharma was never decisive. Take the example of women covering their faces with a veil. This was happening some years ago, but not any longer. So, have we left the dharma? No, we have discarded a custom, not Sanatana dharma. What is the definition of dharma? Whatever brings you closer to God and humankind is *dharma* and the opposite is *adharma*. It is the same in all religions and also in Sanatana dharma.

*That is dharma
Which leads to devotion in Me.
That is knowledge
Which leads to the union
Of Atma and Brahman.
That is vairagya
Which leads to non-attachment,
Anima and other siddhis
Are real wealth.*

Is there any particular message that you wish to give the people this year?

For the last five years, many people have been bothering me with numerous telephone calls. I could not explain to many of them, with whom I have been very close, why they should not do this. They would think that I had become egoistic, because I did not wish to maintain contact. So, I thought, now that five years have passed, let me call everybody together for a farewell. Then I will tell them not to come again, not to knock on my door or send money orders, letters and greeting cards, because I have no interest in any of these things. Kabir says:

*It is not possible to apply collyrium to my eyes
Because my lover is pervading even there.
So there is no space left for anything else.*

I cannot maintain any other relationship now, because that would mean that I would have to discard my relationship with God. This scabbard can contain only one sword, not two. I have left my home, my family, my ashram, for what? When a sadhaka leaves his home under the influence of intense vairagya, he has only one aim, to turn his whole life towards God. Of course, there are sadhus who are caught in organizations. We sadhus are scholars; we study a lot. Self-study, *swadhyaya*, gives you a direction and satsang also helps. But there is only one way to reach God. You must find out what the relationship is between you and Him.

I discovered my relationship with God after I came here. Earlier I did not know and I would parrot:

*You are my mother,
You are my father,
You are my relative,
You are my friend,
You are my learning,
You are my riches.
O Lord, You are my all in all.*

I repeated this for twelve years, twenty years, forty years. Now, after coming here I have realized that I am so insignificant in God's scheme. I am subject to death and disease. I am full of vices and mistakes. My body does not have anything which will be of use after my death. The skin of a cow or a deer, the bones and teeth of a tiger, the tails of certain animals are of use after their death, but what use is a man's body after death?

This same man proudly thinks, "I am the Lord's best son." People increase their sense of self-importance by saying, "I am the prime minister's son," etc. People say, "O Lord, you are my father, mother, friend, lover." But I say, "You are my master; I am Your servant. Whatever You say, I will do."

How can I know that God loves me?

There will be signs to indicate that God is accepting you. This, of course, depends on what groundwork you have done. I do not know if God will really accept me. God must be thinking that all these people are praising Him. Even Swami Satyananda says that he loves me! Everybody says that they love Him, but how do we know whether He is accepting our love or not? This is the weakness of any love. No matter how intensely a lover loves his beloved, a doubt always remains at the back of his mind. Does she really accept my love? Does she love me? This is a very great tragedy in the life of a lover. There is a beautiful song by Rabi Balen:

*This is the way of the world,
Whosoever loves me
Binds me with a string of love.
But Your intense love is peculiar;*

Its ways are quite new.
You never tie me in the bondage of love.
You keep me ever free.
Other lovers do not leave my company
For fear that I might forget them,
But You are one
Who does not show His face,
And days pass.
Your love is unique,
Whether I call You in prayer or not,
Whether I remember You or not,
Your love always awaits my love.

Sometimes I used to think that it does not matter whether God accepts you and loves you or not. You just do your duty. Then sometimes I think it is not like that. If someone gets God's love, he gets everything. What is the form of God's love? The definition of God's love varies. Somebody who does not have a son, gets a son. If there are a lot of problems before a marriage, they get solved. An incurable disease is cured. People accept these instances as God's grace. It has been said in *Srimad Bhagavata*:

One who experiences Your grace
Deeply, eagerly, every moment,
Who enjoys the pleasures and pains
Destined by the karma,
With a clear mind,
And surrenders totally
With a heart full of love,
A body full of delight –
He becomes qualified for liberation,
Just as a son becomes the heir
Of his father's property.

The form of grace varies from person to person, especially for mundane people who are suffering from their worldly sorrows. They do not have the willpower to bear this sorrow. What if that man does not get a son? It is a big shock for

him. He badly wants a son, so he goes on breaking his head against God's image. These things cannot be explained to people, because they are swaying on their swing of happiness and misery. Each one has his own desires which are most important to him. Your desires are not important to me, but they are most important to you. In *Srimad Bhagavata*, Lord Krishna says to His queen, Rukmini:

*After attaining Me, who is the abode
Of liberation and all the riches,
O my darling, those who still desire wealth
Are unfortunate, in as much as,
The enjoyment of sensory objects
Is possible even in hell
Or in forms which are hell like.
Still they have to fall into hell,
For they are desirous of sensory enjoyment.*

God knows all this. What is the reason that we are not able to activate this force within us and get over the worldly sufferings? The two qualities of faith and trust are missing within us. It is not possible for everyone to activate these qualities constantly, only for a short time. Remember what I am telling you. Faith in God will bring you out of crisis situations a few times, but do not think that this will happen every time.

The main purpose of faith and trust is to develop love for God, *bhakti*, even while living in the external, transient world. It is not a matter of having faith and trust in God, so you surrender to Him and then everything becomes okay. That is not the purpose of faith and trust. Faith and trust are necessary in order to develop an experience of God, to have darshan and to merge in Him. This should be the aim; if not today, then tomorrow; if not tomorrow, then in the next life.

Anyway, this is not the reality; reality is different. Everybody has his own definition. It has been said in *Srimad Bhagavata*:

*O Lord, let me be fortunate enough
In this birth or in any other,*

*Even in the womb of birds and beasts,
To become one of Your servants,
And be at the service of Your feet,
Which are as tender
As the new leaves of a tree.*

People suffer because of their own desires, and when the suffering becomes unbearable and there is no other way, then they turn to God. You develop intense faith and then your crisis slowly goes away. But when you are in the crisis, that is when you should transform your entire life, totally.

*Rahim says that the business-like love
Of giving and taking is not praiseworthy.
There should be no expectation of life,
Whether you win or lose.*

You should tread the path of God. There is no end to desires and they will never be fulfilled. One desire leads to another, then to another, and so on. They are like the waves of the ocean, which arise incessantly, following one after another. When a situation occurs in which you experience God helping you, then and there you should transform your life and give it a totally new direction. It has also been said in *Srimad Bhagavata*:

*A wise person, whether desireless,
With desires, or desirous of liberation,
Should pray to God with extreme devotion.*

And finally:

*O traveller of the night,
Do not feel tired.
Now the morning of destination
Is not far away.*

What is the significance of gifting cows, and how did Sivananda Math take up this project?

I have a very senior disciple who lives in Denmark. One day he telephoned to say that he wanted to donate a cow. It was

a wonderful idea. There is no donation better or greater than that of a cow. In the Mahabharata, Bhishma explains its importance to Yudhishtira:

*Cow, earth and Saraswati have similar qualities.
These three should be offered to others.
The result of gifting any one of them is the same.
These three fulfil the desires of man.
The cow is the mother of living beings,
And capable of giving happiness to all.
One who desires upliftment
Should circumambulate the cow from the right side.*

It has also been said in *Vrihatparashara Smriti*:

*Even by touching cows, all the sins of man are destroyed.
If served with respect, they bestow affluence.
If given as gifts, they take one to the heavens.
There is no wealth comparable to them.*

All the household deis and devatas reside in the cow. Wherever there is a cow, the air becomes pure. Even the waste or excretory matter of the cow is pure. Imagine the purity of an animal whose excretory matter is pure, free of germs and kills germs. It has been mentioned in *Vishnu Purana*:

*That place where cows live becomes pure.
That house where cows are kept becomes pure.
It is said that by smearing the floor of a place
With cowdung, it becomes pure.
Yajnashtalas and temples should be smeared with cowdung.
In cowdung, Lakshmi herself resides always.*

I said, “Okay, we will make a new program. This year we will give cows to the farmers.” This is one asset a farmer ought to have. The people here are not white collar office workers. They are all very poor labourers; this could be labelled as a backward community. Some are Hindu, some Muslim, some do not know if they are Hindu or Muslim. It is good if one does not know what his religion is.

*How much better it would have been,
If someone had taken back the religions,
And given a cultured civilization
And men of good morals instead.*

It seems that the rural people have stolen your heart. Why are they so special?

The people living here, within a radius of three to four kilometres, are all skilled labourers: motor mechanics, electricians, masons, gardeners. In a way, I have become attached to them; my bhavana has found a harmony with them. There is nothing superficial about them in behaviour or in dress. They do not take any synthetic food or wear synthetic clothes, nor do they have synthetic love. Everything about them is natural. If I did not get food from the ashram, these villagers would provide it. They send food for me and for Bholenath too. Whenever there is a festival or pooja, they send his share. Bholenath is so popular with them that they climb the trees to have a look at him. Of course, he barks at them! But they are very poor. I have seen poverty before, but never so close.

There was boy of twelve years who could not walk straight. When I asked, "What's the matter?" his parents said that the boy could not see because he was going blind. I found out that the boy had cataracts and his parents did not know about it, because they did not have the means to go to a doctor, even in Deoghar town, ten kilometres away. This disease is curable. We sent him to a doctor who implanted a lens in his eye, and now the boy can see. Wherever there are compulsions or limitations, that is poverty.

Now, a lot of people have cows. For mating, they need a bull, but there is no means by which they can get a bull from Deoghar, just ten kilometres away. In the cities, we spend crores of rupees in a night, but we are neglecting the basic foundation of Indian culture. The Indian tradition continues with the poorest of the poor people. They will not deviate from their tradition, even if they have to borrow money or sell their jewellery. The marriage ceremony is to be completed in

the full traditional way, and any festivity is to be done as per the established custom. If this culture disappears because of poverty, then it is meaningless whether Indians remain united or otherwise.

Dharma is no longer the foundation of the nation. In today's context, the nation is the foundation for dharma. What is then the foundation of the nation? It is the *samskriti*, or the culture, which you see among the poor people here. Some of you may not have lived in a village, and to you my advice is to live in one for some time to experience that life and see the skills that they use for survival, the survival of the fittest.

There is a plot of land behind this place. The villagers have made a *sankalpa* to give this land to us. The formalities are not yet complete, and the government has to give its approval. Swami Niranjani's plan is to make a reservoir there. It will be dug to a depth of three hundred feet and used to store rainwater, which will later be used for irrigation. Aluminium pipes connected by hooks will be used to take the water to the surrounding area. It will be simple.

What is the purpose of social service beyond material upliftment?

Whatever work is being done here is not social service. This is *prasad*, like the sweets you get when you go to the temple. So, this is also *prasad* from the *akhara*. There are different types of *prasad*. When a *rajarishi* does *sadhana*, then the *prasad* should be befitting a *rajarishi*. A *rajarishi* is somebody who has lived like a *raja*, a king, and also like a *rishi*. A *raja*, a king, symbolizes wealth and *shakti*, power, which are the positive qualities of a king, *jnana*, or knowledge is the quality of a *rishi*. A *rishi* has inner knowledge; he sees the inner light and hears the inner voice.

A person who is a *rajarishi* has these qualities. What will he give as *prasad*? An ordinary sweet? No, he will give cows, bicycles to school children, houses to poor people. When the daughter goes back to her husband's house after the marriage, then he gives her beautiful clothes and finery. If she stands in finery in front of you, imagine she is your own daughter. Who

knows! She might come as your daughter in your next life, so it is better that you deal with her now. That way, you exhaust the karmas of your future births also. Everybody has to bear the fruit of karma.

In *Ramacharitamanas* it has very aptly been said:

*The Lord bestows fruits
According to a man's
Good or evil karmas.
A man receives fruits
According to his own deeds.
The Vedas, the scriptures
And all people say so.*

You should not think that what we are doing is social service. This is *prasad*, not social service. The concept of social service is giving aid at the time of an emergency, when there are natural calamities. Calamity is the mother of poverty. If there is an earthquake and then you help, that is social service. Otherwise, whenever you help others, it should be with the spirit of offering service to the Lord. The *Bhagavad Gita* says, 'Therefore, the followers of the Vedas should undertake acts like *yajna*, service and austerities as directed by the scriptures, with the recitation of Om in the beginning.' If a *sadhu* comes to your house and you are well off, it is your duty to give him some food. However, do not give with that spirit; give as an offering. If a beggar comes to your house, do not have the attitude of helping a poor man. Instead, feel that you are giving to the Lord. Who knows? Lord Narayana can come in any form.

*The sheikh goes on pilgrimage to worship a stone,
Whereas all the beings in this temple of the world
Are worth worshipping.*

It has also been said:

*Our ears do not become beautiful
By wearing golden earrings,
But by hearing the scriptures.*

*Similarly, our hands do not become beautiful,
By wearing bangles, but by doing service.
The body is decorated not by sandal paste,
But by showing mercy and doing good to others.*

Kabir says:

*In this world one should meet
With others without reservation.
Because who knows in which form
Narayana might appear.*

There was a mahatma named Namdev in Maharashtra. A dog was eating bread from his dish and when it saw Namdev, it ran away. Namdev ran after the dog with the bread calling, "Please take some butter also." He thought, God can come in any form, because God has no form and can take any form. So, everybody should be careful. God can come as an important person of authority or as a big businessman. Everyone will notice such a person, but if he comes as a weak person, a blind person, a beggar, then you will not treat him with respect, and you will give him only small change. This is our normal attitude. God says in *Srimad Bhagavata*:

*Being indigenious,
The gods are popular amongst the poor;
But rich people do not remember them.*

We generally have a feeling that people are going to cheat us. Yes, there are people who cheat, but the number of people who think they will be cheated is much greater than the number who cheat. So, give! We should not always think that we will be cheated. That destroys our faith and makes us narrow. A person like this is neither a king nor a rishi. The king would say, "What will he take? Only some money." A king or a rishi is not afraid of anybody. So, whenever you help others and do charity, remember that you are doing it for God's sake. Everybody says that service to others is service to the Lord. I am just reminding you of an old truth. Kabir has so aptly remarked:

*God never resides in those
Who are full of doubts.
There is not a feather of a doubt
In the minds of those
Who are devotees of Rama.*

The *Bhagavad Gita* (4:40) has also said, ‘The ignorant, the faithless, the doubting self goes to destruction; there is neither this world nor the other, nor happiness for the doubting.’

Swamiji, we have some questions we would like to ask.

I used to go to Vindhyachal to the Devi temple every day. I used to walk although I had blisters on my feet. All of you sit down comfortably. So many of you have come and I cannot talk to all of you at once. Only Lord Rama could do it.

Please tell us about your life here.

Every evening at six o'clock, I do tulsi pooja and peepal pooja. I have planted peepal and placed Hanumanji there. I have also placed Ganeshaji here. Actually, I have not done it. Ganeshaji came here himself, and when he came, he gave the message, “Do not ignore me.” Therefore, I placed all of his images and named them. The one in the back is Ganesh Ali. A Muslim God is not Muslim, because God himself does not have a religion. Kabir has said:

*Allah and Ilahi are one.
People wrongly have given them two names.
Kabir says that one should not be deluded
By hearing these two names.
There are many names for one thing.
You should recognize the essence
And not bother about the names.
Rather, you should know the real thing.
There are infinite names for Brahman
And there is no end to it.
Kabir says: after much thought
You should accept any one of them as you please.*

We put a stamp on God. Christ was not Christian, Buddha was not Buddhist and Mahavir was not Jain. The stamp of religion can be put on me or you, but not on God. Tulsidas says:

*Even the Chandal, Sabara, Khasa, Yavana,
The foolish and mean Kola and Kirata,
Become highly venerated and famous in the world,
By taking the name of Lord Rama.*

Everyone depends on Him and that should be the right attitude, but that was not my *bhavana*, my feeling. My feeling for Ganeshaji came about much later. First, peculiar things happened which developed my faith and trust and opened my eyes. Generally, I always ate the rice mixture, *khichari*, or wheat mixture, *dalia*. But the day Ganeshaji came, *dalia* and *khichari* disappeared. Ganeshaji does not like this food.

It was okay for Lord Shankara, who has no standards and no idea about what to eat, where to live, how to talk or what to think. Shankaraji is happy-go-lucky, but Ganeshaji likes everything to be proper, tip-top! He is an intellectual and he wears fine clothes, a nice mala and flowers. He puts on perfume and eats laddus. He lives in style and associates with learned people. I like this. My ego has been boosted! I am a devotee of Shiva and Ganesha is Shiva's son, so Ganesha becomes my *gurubhai*.

Now my kitchen has totally changed, and it is also becoming expensive. People bring so much food every day: fruits, bread and butter. Ganeshaji arranges everything. He said, "Satyananda, you are being a miser. Forget *dalia* and *khichari*. Don't worry, your money won't be spent. Let everybody eat upma, idli, dosa, puri, paratha. Come on, this human body survives on food. If you don't let people enjoy good food and wear good clothes, life becomes dull and monotonous, and they become depressed."

I had to accept Ganeshaji, not because of this, but because things started happening. The whole kitchen changed; vegetables, pickles and salad were being prepared every day. People from the villages came bringing nice food. One person would bring curd, another something else. Then I realized

that Ganeshaji had started making his own arrangements! What difference does it make? I accepted all the changes. If God comes and stays in your house by His own volition, devis and devatas come. Then you should live with total faith and trust, no longer depending on your intellect, wealth or cleverness.

Faith and trust are not worldly virtues, they are spiritual qualities. Today, in short, what I have told you is about faith and trust. You should all aim to develop these qualities by good satsang, not the satsang where politics and caste come in. *Satsang* means association with truth, from the roots *sat* and *sanga*. The truth here is God.

While highlighting the importance of satsang, Tulsidas says in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*Without satsang, no story of Rama is possible,
And without that, there is no destruction of delusion.
Without the destruction of delusion
No strong devotion to the feet of Rama is possible.*

If you cannot organize satsang, then at least read good books like *Ramacharitamanas*, *Srimad Bhagavata* and *Guru Granth Sahib*. It has been said in *Srimad Bhagavata*:

*True and real knowledge
Are attainable in the human body only.
So, having obtained this body,
Wise persons should remember Me,
After abandoning attachment to these gunas.*

Ramacharitamanas is the most powerful tonic for generating bhakti. One should read it regularly to please the Lord and to please himself.

Tulsidas has said:

*Only those persons can tread this path,
Who are specially graced by Hari.
Those who sing this story without deceit,
Attain success in their desired aim.*

Satsang 20

November 28, 1994

The contribution of the West towards the propagation of yoga, its movement and awakening throughout the world, cannot be overlooked. We should be grateful to them for this. Had the people of the West not worked for the progress of yoga, Indian intellectuals would never have responded. People serving in England, North America, South America or Australia have helped me very much in propagating yoga and bringing yoga to a position of recognition and respect around the world.

Swami Satyadharma, an American, has become an Indian citizen. She is a senior sannyasin. She was sent by the Bihar School of Yoga to Australia last year. She may be sent to Australia for a longer period this year. She is a very gifted teacher. You can call her to Greece sometime. She plays Bhairavi and all the other raagas on the flute, aalap, vistar, taan. I taught her aalap, taan, etc. and while teaching her, I sang Raaga Bhairavi for one full hour. It was very nice. She has organized the entire library, including all my written articles.

Swami Yogabhakti, from France, has started a foundation called Research on Yoga in Education (RYE), which is supported by UNESCO. She was a teacher at Condorcet High School in Paris. Now she is a professor of yoga in a university and has opened branches of yogic studies all over the country. Through UNESCO, she puts pressure on the education ministries of India and other countries around the world to integrate yoga into the school curriculum. She also translates

and publishes all our books in French. Now UNESCO has proposed that at least twice a week a program on yoga should be telecast through audiovisual media.

Western people have not accepted the caste system or *sati pratha*. They have not accepted a number of our traditions. But they have accepted the yoga culture, because it is a need of the present times and it is scientific. The effects of yoga can be proved by scientific experimentation. The benefits of the caste system or *sati pratha* cannot be proved by scientific means. What is the proof that you are a *brahmin* or I am a *rajput*? Science will never be able to explain the difference.

Yoga, however, has been accepted and propagated. The other tradition that the West has accepted is *sannyasa*. Swami Vivekananda and Paramahansa Yogananda were well respected. Acharya Rajneesh was not respected, because he was not a *sannyasin*. They have also accepted Swami Sivananda, because he belonged to a tradition. The people of the West are also traditional. Knowledge has a tradition, science has a tradition and history has a tradition. They have done so much research in history that it is a tradition. The people of the West have traditions of different schools of thought and that is why they accept tradition.

They have accepted the *sannyasa* and Vaishnava dharma traditions. They have also accepted the Sikh religion. In the West, many people become Sikhs nowadays. They grow a beard and wear a turban. They adopt Sikh names like Kirpal Singh. They recite *Guruwani* and study *Guru Granth Sahib*. The girls wear *salwar-kurta* like Sikh ladies. They think this is a good thing, because it is a tradition.

However, *sannyasa* is respected everywhere. When I used to initiate Western people into *sannyasa*, they would come with a lot of sincerity and devotion. On the initiation day, they would fast in the morning, bathe and shave their heads. They did not know how to shave their head, so the barber would charge four hundred dollars and spend one or two hours performing the ritual. Then I taught them how to use a razor for that purpose. They would take water from a bucket to wet their hair in order to facilitate the shaving. Parents also used

to bring their children for sannyasa and I would give them names like Janamashtami, Uttarkashi and so on. They liked these names and I would explain their meaning as well. When I saw that these people had immense love and devotion for this tradition, then I thought that Indians should show their gratitude towards them.

Is there an ancient link between Greece and India?

Chandragupta was a very powerful emperor. He defeated Alexander in old Punjab, near Takshila, a place in present Pakistan. Takshila had a very celebrated university. More than 2,500 years ago, three ancient universities existed in India. One was at Takshila, where Alexander himself came. In the Greek literature, it is also called Takshila. The second university was at Nalanda, in Bihar, near Gaya and Rajgirorghir, about a hundred miles from Munger. The third university was Vikramshila in Bhagalpur district. These were the three great universities. Takshila university was the seat of vedic learning, which people today call Hinduism. Nalanda was the seat of Hinayana Buddhist learning. Vikramshila was the seat of Mahayana Buddhism. These were the three ancient universities.

After his defeat, Alexander retreated, but he did not reach Greece. Seleucus followed and Chandragupta allowed him to penetrate deep into Indian soil. He did not face him at the borders. At Patna, he defeated him and married his sister! Her name was Helena Ashoka. The great emperor, Ashoka, whose reign is known as the golden age of India, was the grandson of Chandragupta and Helena, so he was fifty-fifty. His descendants ruled during the period of Chandragupta and later up to the time of the Mauryas. There was a permanent ambassador, Megasthenes, from Greece or Macedonia, who used to sit in the Indian court.

That is the history of how the Greeks came to India. Here, Alexander met many sannyasins and nagababas, the naked sadhus, like me, without clothes or with minimum clothes, and he had a lot of discussions with them. Alexander came not only with an army, but also brought philosophers. This stands to reason, because there are only two philosophies in the

world, the Indian and the Greek. There is no third philosophy. Western philosophy is Greek philosophy which has become Western. There is no Western science; it is Greek science which has become Western. They have taken Greek ideas and put a European stamp on them. Anyone can do this.

Now, they are trying to bury the Greek philosophy, aren't they?

Let us not talk pessimistically. I am talking about something very nice to remember. After all, every race and every culture has some pessimistic qualities, but why talk about them. Let us forget them. Greek philosophy is the root of all philosophies in the western hemisphere and vedic philosophy is the root of all philosophies in the eastern hemisphere, right up to Japan. These are the only two philosophies, and these are the only two cultures in which there was a very close interaction between East and West.

Western astronomy and astrology are just Greek astronomy and astrology. The sciences are from Greece. However, there were some things which the Greeks could not pick up, like the numerical system: one, two, three, four, five, six. The vedic system was the best in this respect. If you do calculations in the ancient numerical system, it would take one minute. But if you take the vedic numerical system and calculate, it would take ten seconds and it is similar to the modern system. The Greek numerical system has become redundant.

So, there are certain aspects where every culture has its limitations. You do not have to feel sorry about it. Many Indian boys, from Bengal especially, went to Russia and other Eastern European countries, during the communist period. They often married there and the girls came here. Similarly, such interactions took place during the ancient period between Greece and India, particularly in Bihar.

What is the most important aspect of your sadhana?

The most important part is continual awareness of the breath and the mantra while in a relaxed mood. Normal, spontaneous breathing, awareness of the breath and the mantra with the

breath, and thinking all the time: Who is God to me and who am I to Him? Who is He and who am I? What is my relationship with Him? Most of us have not discovered this. We worship God as something apart from ourselves, but one thing we forget is that we are related to Him.

Everyone is connected to God, just as all the light bulbs, fridges, air conditioners, machinery plants, and everything electrical is connected to the main powerhouse. It doesn't matter that one appliance gives light, another heat and the other cold. Everything is connected to the powerhouse, but the relationship is different. The relationship between the powerhouse and a fridge, bulb or cooler is different in each case.

During these five years, I have been able to discover that relationship. I am grateful to God for revealing it. I always used to say, "You are my father, my mother, my brother, my friend, my everything." I think all of you do the same thing. It is true, but He is one thing to me and another thing to you. Since most people have not discovered their relationship with God, they are floundering in darkness.

One thing that I have learned in these five years is that I am residing in this physical body and my mind is also residing in it. My associations, interactions, thinking patterns, aims and objects; my karma, dharma, addictions, sins and weaknesses, my special qualities and gifts, are all physical in nature. Therefore, I am deha buddhi not atma buddhi. So, a man who is born and lives with his soul in the body should have that relationship. Radha had a different relationship with God, because she did not belong to deha buddhi. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Mirabai and many other saints had a different relationship.

For so many years, I did not even know that I was His reluctant, disobedient, ignorant and foolish servant. I did not know it. Do you understand? I was His foolish servant, but I did not know it. I thought I was a part of God. It was here that the revelation came. When I think of the past, then I realize that it was He who told me to go to Munger, as well as to leave Munger. He told me to come to Rikhia, but I thought that was the voice and order of my inner mind! I

was under the delusion that I had a superior inner mind. However, I know now that there is no such thing. Therefore, now the next phase of my spiritual life begins. Prior to that, I am meeting all of you in order to tell you, “Don’t come again unless I call you.”

How can we develop a relationship with God

Develop some sweet relationship with God, if you are able to. If not, other relationships are possible. Surdas used to say: “There is nobody as dishonest as I am. I am the worst rascal. I am more crooked and more debauched than anyone else.” That was his relationship with God. He completely humbled himself. Even if one can feel that in relationship with God, I think one will be able to transcend the limitations of life. You can develop the relationship that I am nothing. I am hopeless, yet I am Yours. Whatever You consider me to be, I am Yours. At least I consider myself as Yours, even though I am unworthy. Tulsidas says in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*I have heard that Hari is the
Purifier of sinners;
I am a sinful man and You are
The purifier of sinners.
The pair is quite befitting,
The hunter, the prostitute, the elephant,
Ajamil and the Vedas are all witnesses to it.
You have liberated so many mean people.
They are innumerable.
If someone takes Your name
Consciously or unconsciously,
Both heaven and hell are prohibited to him,
Because he is liberated.
The servant Tulsidas has come under Your shelter.
Please accept him forever.*

Even that relationship is all right, but it has to be felt in the same way as you feel hatred for somebody. All the time you are thinking of Him, as you would worry about your nearest kith and kin, your son, daughter, husband, wife, beloved or

anyone. Suffering on account of not remembering the Lord has been defined in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*O Lord, said Hanuman,
Whenever I do not remember You
Or recite Your name
That is the period of my distress.*

All the time you are thinking of Him, just as when you are disturbed, you cannot think of anything else. The depth of awareness for God has to be much deeper than that of a poojari. When you worship God, you have some feeling for Him. When you go to the temple or holy place, you have some feeling, but it has to be deeper than that.

If you are a true servant, all the time you are aware of the master. A devotee of Krishna says:

*It is difficult for me
To speak about the love of Shyam.
The sky, the water, the earth,
The sentient and insentient beings,
All appear to me as Shyam,
And Shyam only.
Neither Brahman nor illusion,
Neither jiva nor time appear.
Even awareness of myself is lost.
Only One remains, and that is Nandalal.
Who can tell the secret of my heart,
To whom and how can it be told?*

And again another poet has expressed this sentiment:

*While seeking Hari, my heart was lost
And it is Hari only, who is visible everywhere.*

There is a story about Hanumanji to illustrate this point. Hanuman used to attend Lord Rama. Lord Rama would be inside and Hanuman would stay outside at the gate. Lord Rama said to him, "Hanuman, whenever I yawn, you must click your fingers." Hanuman thought, "But I don't know when he is going to yawn." So, he went on clicking his fingers

all the time. That should be the attitude of a servant. The servant has no choice; that is the most important thing.

*A servant should bear the scorching heat of the sun,
But he should not relinquish obedience to his master.
Without fixative, a cloth is not coloured well.*

I tell the people who stay here, “Don’t come to tell me anything. I don’t want anyone’s suggestions.” If I am their master, I do not want their suggestions. When I do not give them a choice, how can my master give me a choice?

*That servant is most dear to me
Who obeys my commands well.*

He gave me no choice. He made me leave my family, hearth and home. I did not know at the time that He was doing it; that is the only difference. I thought I was leaving, because I had developed vairagya, or because I wanted to awaken the kundalini, or because I wanted to know the atma or paramatma. This is what I was thinking. I was attributing everything to myself.

Then He asked me to live in Rishikesh. Rishikesh was my dream. I thought that it was I who had made it. It is not out of ego that I say this. For years together, day and night, I worked to build up the ashram there. From each and every brick, nail and door, I could now make a picture, but He asked me to leave. I left Rishikesh, but I did not know that I was following God’s order. I thought that perhaps my guru was sending me for a greater mission. What ignorance, arrogance, maya! But I obeyed, that is all. I was not a disobedient servant, but I was an ignorant and reluctant one. Tulsidas has described this very beautifully in *Ramacharitamanas*:

*Rama is pleased only with devotion –
Otherwise who is more foolish and
Fickle-minded than me in the world?
Kind Rama will keep in mind
The love and interest of even the wicked servant,
He, by whose grace stones behaved like boats*

*And foolish monkeys and bears became advisors.
Seeing a servant like Tulsidas
And a master like Rama, the husband of Sita,
People laugh, but it is Lord Rama who has to bear this.*

He asked me to go to Australia. He said, "It is a nice place with good, simple people. They like yoga. They need yoga. They will receive yoga. They will propagate yoga." And so it happened. He asked me to go to Scandinavia. He told me the names of the people I should meet there. I went to them. Everywhere I went, I received guidance, but I thought it was my inner being who was speaking, my supersoul. Who is my supersoul? There is no supersoul! God is the first and the last. There is no supermind, no supernatural consciousness. For me, those are all interpretations and definitions; they are our words, our lamentations. Everything is God, whom I have not seen or perhaps will not even see in the future. An Urdu poet has said:

*None has come, none will come.
But what else to do, except wait?*

I dreamed Ganga Darshan. I saw it clearly and then I drew up the plans from my dream. I made the model and it is still there. I said, "Classrooms will be twenty by eighteen; these are the corridors." I saw everything. The plans for Ganga Darshan were ready, well before it was built. Somewhere, much before, it was built in space. First, things are built in space and time, then they become a manifest reality. That is how Ganga Darshan was built. An architect wanted to make certain changes. I said, "No changes will be made." He made one toilet, but they had to remove it. I had to send a plumber from here to close it completely.

When He asked me to leave Munger, I left. Why did I leave it? I thought, now this institution is too much for me, because I had made a promise. When I was in Trayambakeshwar, after leaving Ganga Darshan, it came to my mind, "No, it can't be myself." At that time, it became clear to me that I am nothing and You are everything. Whatever You

ask me to do, I will do. It is not my mind which speaks; it is not my life which lives. It is You who speaks, who thinks and lives.

So far as I am concerned, I have no need to pray. Prayer is not the dharma of a servant. The servant has no choice. His only duty and dharma is to carry out the orders of his master. The master gives you an order and you carry it out. Why should the servant pray to the master? There is no need for prayer. Human beings have a weakness, and they exploit that weakness. They blackmail themselves.

Kabir has said:

*One who is bound without any binding,
Who remains free from all the restraints,
And works without the feeling of doer,
He is a good servant.*

Those who have disturbed minds cannot hear or understand God's words. I am talking to you. If some people were playing a band here, you would not be able to listen to me. When the band stops, then you could listen to me. The band is going on in the mind. The mind is playing the band all the time; it is disturbance and disturbance and disturbance inside. In that disturbance, God's advice and commands are not heard. Therefore, it is necessary that one should quieten the mind by any method. Yoga is one way, and it is a very important one.

I want your blessings for my sadhana.

Wait for a while; grihastha ashrama is also a sadhana. Brahmacharya ashrama, grihastha ashrama, vanaprastha ashrama, sannyasa ashrama are all ashramas. *Ashrama* means a place where you labour. *Shram* means labour of two types. The first is the work you do, the second is spiritual labour. In grihastha ashrama both types of shram are there. So, when you feel like doing sadhana, pray to God. Ask Him, "What should I do?" He Himself will give you the inspiration. Wherever you are, He is there. Kabir has said:

*O devotee,
Where are you searching for me?
I am within you.
I am not to be found in quarrels
Or in bad relations,
In a knife or in an axe.*

God is wherever you are. You won't have to search for him anywhere else, although he is elsewhere also. God is not far from you. He is closer to you than your own breath, closer than your own prana, closer than your own mind. He is your closest companion, much closer than your husband. God is your friend, your prana, your life, your eyes and your ears. All your energy is His. You are the grandeur of God; think like this. This has been said in *Yoga Vashishta*:

*In the beginning of creation
This world which is visible was not,
And it never existed in reality.
This world, and I, all exist in God.
The emergence of this truth
Is the path of true knowledge.*

Pray to Him and He will show you the way. God can show the way to anybody. If He has shown the way to me, He will show the way to you. He has shown the way to Mirabai. He showed the way to Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. He showed the way to all those who sought His advice. Whoever sought the way with a true heart and laboured for it was shown the true way by the Lord. The true way is only one: wherever you are, remain a servant of God. Mirabai always used to pray, "Please Lord, keep me as your servant."

God's blessings are for everyone. Suppose it is pouring rain, and you put a corked bottle outside to collect the water. Beside the bottle, you also keep a plate and an empty glass. It is pouring rain, but the bottle will remain empty because it is corked, and the plate will contain more water than the glass. Similarly, God's words and blessings are pouring down everywhere, but we need to open our minds more.

You should always feel yourself in tune with Him. To keep in tune with Him, it is necessary to expose yourself to satsang from time to time. Without satsang, you cannot develop discrimination. Without the Lord's grace, you do not get an opportunity for satsang. Through satsang your devotion to God becomes strong. To have real satsang, you only need His grace. Satsang is where you experience the presence or association with truth, the true existence.

You should have satsang from time to time, sing the Lord's name, and study the scriptures pertaining to *bhakti*, devotion to God. You should study the lives of saints and great souls. This country has produced many great souls such as Lord Rama and Lord Krishna, and you should read about their lives. This country has given birth to many householders, like Tukaram, Kabirdas, Nanak Dev, Guru Govind Singh and others, who had children and still led very great lives. This country has given birth to many saints, mahatmas and sannyasins. Read about their lives and get inspiration from them. This advice is not only for you; it is for everybody.

This path is long and arduous. If it were easier, then everyone would attain enlightenment without any effort. People have been making effort after effort to seek God in their minds. However, at the last moment, the Lord's name does not come. The mental conditioning is such that at the last moment one says, "Call my daughter-in-law, call my son." One is unable to utter anything else.

So, people who are on the spiritual path should keep on striving, continuously and regularly. The way to attain God is through satsang. In satsang, you should listen to discourses by learned, virtuous, enlightened souls. If you live in that atmosphere, it will help you. In *Srimad Bhagavata*, Maitreyaji says:

*When the Lord is pleased,
What else is there to be obtained in this world?
He is capable of fulfilling all desires,
So why have such small desires?
To those who remember Him and Him only,*

*Without asking help from others,
He bestows even His own high post.*

Can we develop a relationship with God as guru through you?

God's servant and your guru are two things which cannot coexist. The servant is always a servant. When that servant becomes the guru of someone else, then he cannot remain the servant of his master. The servant cannot be the master and serve the master at the same time. He has to leave one of the two posts. Here the principal of two posts does not exist. If he has to remain as guru, then he has to resign from service to God. He has to render his resignation. I am not prepared to do that, because I find service to God more beneficial than being a guru.

It is not a big thing for me to collect ten thousand, twenty thousand, forty thousand rupees as guru dakshina in a year. It is a very small thing. While being in the service of God, I get a chance to have the darshan of Goddess Lakshmi daily. Because of Her darshan, I have no need to beg for money. Why should I receive the grace of Goddess Lakshmi through you? Daily in the early morning, I clean the room thoroughly before the arrival of Goddess Lakshmi. You know I am her servant. I wash her sari and petticoat, clean her utensils, prepare her food. She gives me something and at the same time does not give me anything. She gives something to others through me.

She has already told me, "See, Satyananda, I am giving this. If you are dishonest, I shall not give anymore." She told me that she gives to many people and all of them spend on their sons and daughters. She is very displeased with them. She told me, "I give to many, but they spend it on sending their children abroad or marrying off someone or purchasing a car. That is why I have stopped giving to them. I am giving to you, but if you spend on yourself, then you shall also meet the same fate." I said, "I will not do so."

*Giving donation is the destroyer of poverty.
Virtue is the destroyer of suffering.
True knowledge is the destroyer of ignorance.
Devotion to God is the destroyer of fear.*

When Swami Janakananda came and said, “I shall donate a cow from here”, I said, “No, donate it directly from where you purchase it. Don’t bring it to me.” I am scared that Lakshmiji may take away my privilege. Therefore, serve Lord Narayana, and you will automatically get the grace of Goddess Lakshmi, because she is a ‘sati pativrata’. But, if you seek the grace of Goddess Lakshmi only, she will come to your house alone. Then she comes on her own vehicle. She does not come on the vehicle of Lord Narayana. The owl is her transport. She comes and goes by the owl, who is not able to see anything during the day time. So I say, “Do not call Her alone, as She would leave after giving you pleasure for two to four days. Then you are left with nothing; all is gone.”

So, there is no need to call Goddess Lakshmi. Worship Lord Narayana; Goddess Lakshmi stays with Him. Worship Lord Shiva. It is even easier there, as Parvati remains always on His left. There is no need for a double seat; a single seat is adequate. One sofa is sufficient. It is not a joke. You do not have to spread a double seat. A single seat suffices, as half is fair and the other half dark. Half of the portion uses ash and the other half French perfume. Half is adorned with a garland of skulls, the other half with a garland of flowers. Half is smeared with ash, the other half with sandalwood paste. Half is female, the other half male. Half is mother, half is father; this is *Ardhanarishwara*.

*I bow down twice to Lord Shiva,
Whose body is half of mixed colour,
And the remaining half,
The colour of white camphor.
Half of whose hair is decorated,
While the other half
Are the matted locks of a sannyasi.*

*I bow down twice to Lord Shiva,
Whose body is half smeared with musk cream,
And the remaining half
With ashes from the cremation ground.
Who first burnt Kamadeva to ashes,
And then gave him life again.*

*I bow down twice to Lord Shiva,
Whose one lotus foot is adorned with ringing anklets,
And the other with a serpent.
Half of whose body glows like burnished gold,
While the other half is entwined with serpents.*

*I bow down twice to Lord Shiva,
Whose eyes are straight and oblique,
Like blue lotuses in full bloom.*

*I bow down twice to Lord Shiva,
Wearing the garland of Mandara in his hair,
And the garland of skulls around his shoulders.
Half of whose body is clothed in divine raiment,
While the other half is clothed in space.*

*I bow down twice to Lord Shiva,
Half of whose hair is black as cloud,
While the other half is bright and lustrous
Like the thunderbolt.
Who is not the master,
And yet controls the entire universe.*

*I bow down twice to Lord Shiva,
Who has smilingly created the whole universe,
And, at the same time, is the destroyer,
Of all creation with his Tandava dance.
Who is the mother and the father of all the worlds.*

*I bow down twice to Lord Shiva,
Whose earring is a brilliant white jewel,
Who is adorned with a huge hissing serpent,
And who is one with Shiva.*

When you call for Lord Brahma, then Goddess Saraswati also comes along on their vehicle, the swan, Hamsavahini. Lord Vishnu, comes on the far sighted eagle, Garudavahini and Lord Shiva comes on a bull. In Bihar, people say that Lord Shiva rides a bull and comes majestically with joy. His coming is a very blissful event, and there is splendor in it. When Lord Shiva comes, one feels intoxicated. Lord Narayana ushers in prosperity. Lord Brahma brings music, fine arts, dance, knowledge, language and literature. That is why worship of this trinity is the worship of God.

So, Goddess Lakshmi has warned me not to indulge in any hanky panky, “You have asked for others, haven’t you? Whatever is given, it is for others.” Now Bhola Bhandar is full. They will need all the buildings to store the items for distribution. Next month, from the 18th December to 18th January, the trucks will go out loaded. The lists of every family in each and every village are ready.

*Many hoped,
But no one found
Hari’s heart.
Where do the senses rest?
Where do the Ram-chanters go?
Where do the illumined ones go?
Corpses: all gone
To the same place.
Drunk on the nectar of Ram’s bliss.
Kabir says,
I’ve said and I’ve said.
I’m tired of saying.*

Glossary

- Acharya** – spiritual guide or teacher
Adharma – disharmony; wrong actions; not fulfilling one's natural role in life; opposite of dharma
Adityas – resplendent suns; twelve in number
Adivasi – tribal people of India
Advaita – non-dual unity of the individual and cosmic soul
Agastya Muni – eminent Hindu sage
Aghan – ninth month in the Hindu lunar calendar; mid-November to mid-December, also known as Marga Sheersha
Agni – element of fire
Ahamkara – ego; awareness of existence of 'I'
Ahimsa – absence of violence from within; non-violence
Ajapa japa – meditation practice involving spontaneous repetition and awareness of the mantra that is made naturally with the ingoing and outgoing breath
Ajna chakra – sixth pranic centre or chakra, situated at the top of the spinal cord; seat of intuition; centre where guru's commands are received
Akhand agni – constant fire
Akhara – traditionally a place for training sannyasins
Alakh Bara – 'invisible boundary', a place of seclusion; the place where paramahansa sannyasins live
Amara – immortal
Ambar charkha – spinning wheel
Anahada nada – unstruck sound; unheard sound
Anala – fire

Ananda – everlasting, pure bliss
Anantavada – doctrine relating to infinity
Anavastha dosha – observances during the period of shraddha
Aana – small coin; 1/16 of an Indian rupee
Antar atma – innermost core of one's spirit
Anushravika – that which is heard
Anushthana – performance of sadhana with absolute discipline for a requisite period of time
Apah – water
Apara prakriti – lower nature which is eight-fold: earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intellect and ego; material or empirical nature
Aparokshanubhuti – experience of the self
Arati – rite of worship involving waving of lights with reverence before a deity
Ardhanarishwara – form of Shiva as half male and half female
Arahant – state of enlightenment
Arjuna – third of the five Pandava brothers; mighty warrior with expert knowledge of weapons
Artha – need for material and external security; wealth
Asakti – attachment
Asana – steady and comfortable meditative pose; physical posture in which one is at ease and in harmony with oneself
Ashaad – month of June-July in the Hindu lunar calendar
Ashoka – renowned king of Magadha in ancient India
Ashram – place of spiritual retreat and inner growth through external and internal labour
Ashrama – stage or period of life, of which there are four
Ashtottarshatlaksh mantra – 10,800,000 rounds of japa
Atma – individual soul; spirit; self
Atma bhava – awareness and experience of the self
Atmadeepobhava – to be a light unto oneself
Atma jnana – knowledge of the self
Atma nivedan – ninth form of bhakti when even the last vestige of individual identity is dissolved in cosmic awareness
Atma rati – relation with the self
Atma samarpan – surrender of the self
Aum – primordial sound; mantra. See Om

Avadhoota – an ascetic who has renounced all worldly attachments and connections; the sixth order of sannyasa

Avatara – incarnated soul of divinity

Ayodhya – capital city of Lord Rama, the hero of the Ramayana; also considered as the creator's eternally shining city

Ayurveda – vedic system of medical diagnosis and treatment

Bahiranga – outside, external

Bahista – abode of Allah

Bahudak – 'supported by many'; a stage of sannyasa

Bala Mukunda – child with the capacity of liberation; epithet of Lord Krishna

Bandha – psycho-muscular energy lock which redirects the flow of energy or prana in the body

Basmati – best quality rice grown in the foothills of the Himalayas

Bel patra – leaves of the bel tree; used for worshipping Lord Shiva; also referred to as bilwa

Bhagavad Gita – Lord Krishna's teachings to his disciple, Arjuna, delivered at the commencement of the battle of Kurukshetra during the great Mahabharata war

Bhagavati – feminine gender of Bhagavat; concept of God as female, mother goddess in her charitable form

Baidyanath Dham – temple precincts of the jyotirlingam at Deoghar, Jharkhand

Bhairava – epithet of Lord Shiva, signifying the state which is beyond mundane consciousness

Bhairava Sampradaya – sect of Shaivas who consider Lord Shiva as Bhairava

Bhajan – devotional song

Bhakta – devotee

Bhakti – pure, intense inner love; channelling of the intellect, emotions and self towards a higher purpose; literally, divine love

Bhakti yoga – yogic path of intense inner love for God; channelling the emotions towards a higher reality

Bhandar – store

Bhang – intoxicating drug prepared by crushing cannabis leaves with exotic ingredients and mixing the paste with milk, almonds and saffron

Bharat – ‘land engulfed in light’; also the name of one of Lord Rama’s brothers

Bharatnatyam – kind of dance pattern, referred to in ancient scriptures; prevalent throughout India, especially South India

Bhasma – sacred ash worn by Lord Shiva

Bhavana – feeling, emotion; ability to perceive subtle vibrations

Bhavani – feminine of bhava, meaning Shiva; a name of Parvati

Bheda shakti – power to pierce

Bigha – land measure; 5/8 of an acre

Bilwa – see Bel patra

Bhiksha – alms

Bhoga – sensual gratification, enjoyment and experience

Bhoomi – earth

Bhuloka – terrestrial plane of existence

Bhumika – role

Bhuvan – globe

Bhuvvarloka – astral plane of existence; intermediate realm between earth and heaven

Bol Bam – literally, ‘speak the name of Lord Shiva’; mantra used by worshippers at Baidyanath Dham, the jyotirlingam at Deoghar, Jharkhand

Brahma – God as creator, one of the trinity: Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva

Brahmajnana – realization or immediate knowledge of Brahman

Brahman – absolute reality; ever expanding, limitless consciousness

Brahmanas – commentaries in Sanskrit on the Vedas; literally, a collection of utterances and discussions by the priests upon the science of yajna

Brahmarishi – rishi of the highest rank who is one with Brahma

Brahmin – literally, ‘one who is one with Brahma’; priest caste; one of the four varnas or divisions of the caste system in India

Brighu Samhita – scripture on vedic astrology

Brihadaranyaka Upanishad – perhaps the most important Upanishad discussing the identity of individual atma in relation to the universal self, different modes of worship, religion and meditation

- Buddha** – ‘illuminated one’; an enlightened sage who lived in India approximately 2,500 years ago, after whom Buddhism originated
- Buddhi** – intellect; discrimination
- Burka** – garment covering the body, traditionally worn by ladies in Islamic cultures
- Chakra** – ‘wheel’ or ‘vortex’; centre of energy or psychic centre in the subtle body
- Chakravarti** – emperor, sovereign of the world; the ruler of the chakra or country described as extending from sea to sea
- Chamar** – cobbler, belonging to the lowest caste in Indian society
- Chandragupta** – a famous king of ancient India
- Chhandogya Upanishad** – perhaps the oldest Upanishad, part of the Samaveda
- Chappals** – sandals
- Charvak** – philosophy which believes in the four tattwas as the basis of existence
- Chaturmaas** – the four months of the rainy season, traditionally used for sadhana
- Chaupat** – without intelligence; very foolish
- Chela** – disciple; spiritual aspirant
- Chetana** – consciousness
- Chhanda** – metre in Sanskrit verse
- Chhat** – sixth day after the dark night of the moon in October-November according the lunar Hindu calendar; day for the worship of Surya, the sun God
- Chidananda roopa** – having the quality of consciousness and bliss
- Chillum** – earthen pipe in which bhang or ganja is smoked
- Chintamani** – pure mind; wish fulfilling gem
- Chitabhoomi** – cremation ground; a place where funeral pyres are arranged for burning of the dead
- Chita** – burning of the body
- Chitra Ratha** – friend of Kuber (God of wealth); also sun
- Chunari** – colourful veil generally used by a newly married bride
- Crore** – one hundred lakh; ten million
- Dakshina** – gift offered to the guru
- Dakshinayan** – six months when the sun moves to the south of the equator; 22nd June – 21st December

Daan – to give away; an act of unconditional giving
Dal – pulse; lentils
Dalia – wheat mixture
Danda – stick
Daphali – musical instrument; tambourine
Darshan – to glimpse; to see; to have an inner vision and blessing of the divine power; term often used in relation to God and divinity
Darshan Shastra – scriptures on philosophy
Dasharatha – able emperor of India who ruled as king of Ayodhya; father of Lord Rama
Dasya bhakti – devotion of a servant to his master
Dattatreya – deity who is considered one of the forms of Vishnu; combines the nature of all the three gods, Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshvara
Daya – mercy
Deha buddhi – body consciousness
Desha – place; native land
Deva – literally ‘illuminated one’; higher force or power
Devarishi – rishi among the gods
Devata – form of divinity; divine being with a lesser function
Devi – divine force, manifestation of Shakti; goddess
Devipeetha – place where a devi is established
Dharma – natural role one has to play in life; right action; ethical law; duty; one of the four purusharthas
Dhauti – cleansing practices for the stomach region involving gentle washing with air, water, cloth or stick
Dhobi – person who washes clothes for a living
Dhoti – single piece of unstitched cloth tied at the waist to cover the lower half of the body; traditionally geru coloured for sannyasins
Dhumra – smoky
Dhuni – fireplace
Dhyana – meditation; absorption in the object of meditation
Diksha – initiation
Drashta – seer, observer; awareness
Draupadi – born of Agni; daughter of King Drupada of Panchala and wife of the five Pandava brothers

- Drishta** – that which is seen
- Durga** – poorna shakti; personification of Shakti in her fearsome aspect
- Dvaita** – duality
- Dwiragaman** – indian custom in which the young bride returns to the bridegroom's house for the second time, to live
- Ekadashi** – eleventh day of the bright and dark fortnight in a lunar month
- Ekagrata** – one-pointedness
- Fakir** – muslim ascetic
- Gadabad** – disorder
- Gandharvas** – in Buddhist literature, depicted as a race of semi-divine beings; also considered as divine musicians
- Ganesha** – elephant headed one-tusked deity; son of Lord Shiva and Parvati; remover of obstacles; symbol of all that is auspicious, wealth, knowledge and attainment
- Ganja** – hallucinogenic non-chemical drug made out of the cannabis plant; marijuana
- Gayatri mantra** – shakti mantra of twenty-four syllables
- Geru** – earthen red powder extracted from the mud of the river Ganges; colour of the robes of sannyasins
- Ghat** – riverbank
- Gazal** – songs
- Ghee** – butter clarified by simmering
- Gopis** – milkmaids; devotees of Krishna
- Gotra** – family, race, spiritual lineage
- Goytha** – flat or round cow-dung ball dried in the sun; used for pooja, purification of the atmosphere and for cooking
- Grihastha** – householder
- Grihastha ashrama** – second stage of life; married life from about twenty-five to fifty years of age
- Gulabjamun** – indian sweet made from milk
- Guna** – quality or attribute of the mind; three in number: tamas, rajas and sattwa
- Guru** – dispeller of darkness; spiritually enlightened soul, who, by the grace of his own atma, can dispel darkness, ignorance and illusion from the mind of a disciple
- Gurubhai** – disciples of the same guru

Guru Granth Sahib – collection of the teachings of the Sikh gurus

Gurukul – educational system of ancient India where children lived in the ashram or family of the guru and were taught by the guru

Guru mantra – personal mantra given by the guru

Gurushikhar – cave on the outskirts of Mount Abu in Rajasthan where Dattatreya performed austerities

Guru tattwa – inherent element of guru in an individual

Haldi – turmeric

Hamsa – ‘swan’; third stage of sannyasa

Hanuman – son of Pavan, the god of wind, and Anjani, a female monkey; devotee of Lord Rama; considered to be the embodiment of devotion, strength and heroism

Hanuman Chalisa – poem by Tulsidas in praise of Hanuman

Hara – one of the eleven Rudras; also a name of Shiva

Hari – one of the names of Vishnu

Hatha yoga – system of yoga consisting of practices for physical and mental purification

Hridayapeetha – Deoghar; place where the heart of Sati was cremated by Lord Shiva

Indra – chief of the gods; a divinity of the atmosphere controlling the elements

Indriya – sense organ

Irshya – jealousy

Ishk – love

Ishk hakiki – divine love

Ishk mizazi – worldly love

Ishta devata – one’s personal deity or symbol of the supreme

Ishta mantra – mantra of the chosen personal deity

Ishwara – literally, ‘one who rules’; supreme ruler; God

Jagat guru – universal guru; also the special title given to shankaracharyas

Jainism – sect which originated from Lord Mahavir

Janaloka – plane of the rishis and munis

Janaka – father of Sita

Japa – mantra repetition

Jati – genetic code; circumstances of life to which one is born; one’s mark of identity

Jhola – shoulderbag made out of cloth
Jivatma – individual soul
Jivanmukta – a soul who is liberated while living
Jnana – true knowledge, wisdom
Jnanendriyas – five sensory organs
Jnati – knowledge through which one can be identified; one's mark of identity
Juna Akhara – one of the ten akharas in India; see also akhara
Jyotirlingam – self-existing oval shaped stone symbolizing Lord Shiva; there are twelve such lingams in India
Kaala – time
Kabir – religious reformer and saint; a great protagonist of Hindu-Muslim amity, influenced by Sufism
Kali – aspect of maha shakti, which is the destroyer of time and annihilator of the ego
Kaliyuga – Kali's age; fourth, present age of the world, which began in 3102 BC with a duration of 432,000 years. During this cycle mankind is at the height of technology, decadence and corruption of spiritual values
Kalpanavad – imaginism
Kama – emotional need or fulfilment; one of the four purusharthas
Kamakhya – siddhapeetha in Assam
Kameshwar putreshti yajna – yajna performed to have a male child
Kamya karma – action done to fulfil a particular desire
Kansa – king of Mathura; maternal uncle of Lord Krishna
Karana sharira – causal body
Karma – action in the manifest and unmanifest dimension; law of cause and effect that shapes the destiny of each individual with actions inevitably bearing their fruit, as the law works throughout the universe; of three kinds: prarabhda, sanchit, kriyaman
Karma sannyasa – householder sannyasa; renunciation combined with duty
Karma sannyasin – householder sannyasin
Karma yoga – perfection in action; yoga of action; action performed with meditative awareness; yoga of dynamic meditation; yogic path of selfless service

Karmendriyas – five organs of action: hands, feet, tongue, excretory and reproductive organs

Kartal – musical instrument used in kirtan

Kartik – name of the month October–November in the Hindu lunar calendar

Kartik poornima – full moon of the lunar month of Kartik

Kartik Shukla Ekadashi – eleventh day of the bright fortnight during the lunar month of Kartik

Kartikeya – a son of Lord Shiva, worshipped in South India

Karuna – compassion

Kathakali – dance pattern performed in the state of Kerala

Kayastha – caste in India

Khan – sky; space

Khichari – dish made from rice, pulse and ghee

Kinkar vritti – attitude of a servant

Kirtan – repetition of God's name; devotional songs or chanting of mantras with musical accompaniment

Kripa – grace; kindness; blessing

Krishna – avatara whose teachings are recorded in the Bhagavad Gita; eighth incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the cosmic sustainer; darkness

Krishna Janmashtami – eighth day of the dark lunar fortnight of Bhadrapada when Sri Krishna was born

Kriya – action; motion; kundalini yoga practice

Kriyaman karma – present or current actions

Krodha – anger

Kshatriya – one of the four divisions of the caste system in India; warrior; one who protects others from injury

Kshetra – place, field

Kshetra sannnyasa – renunciation of active participation in one's own field

Kuber – lord of wealth

Kula devata – family deity

Kumbha Mela – large festival held every twelve years, rotating between four sacred locations on the river Ganga (Allahabad, Nasik, Varanasi, Haridwar)

Kundalini – vital force or latent energy residing in mooladhara chakra, often referred to as the serpent power

Kundalini yoga – path of yoga which awakens the dormant spiritual force
Kutichak – hut dweller; second stage of sannyasa
Kutir – small cottage
Laghu-guru – the number of matras used in Sanskrit verse
Lakh – one hundred thousand
Lakshmi – goddess of wealth, wife of Vishnu
Langoti – loin cloth
Latapat – complication
Lila – divine play; cosmic game of consciousness and energy
Lobha – greed
Loka – worldly dimension; plane of existence or consciousness, seven in number
Madhu – honey; sweet
Madhurya – sweetness
Madhurya bhava – love between husband and wife, lover and beloved
Madri – second wife of Pandu, father of the Pandavas, mother of Nakula and Sahadeva
Mahaloka – plane of the saints and siddhas
Mahamrityunjaya Mantra – mantra used for combatting disease or death; Shiva mantra
Mahabharata – epic of ancient India involving the great war between the Pandava and Kaurava princes
Mahant – religious leader
Maharani – queen
Mahapurusha – great soul
Mahavakyas – the four highest spiritual sayings: Aham Brahmasmi, I am Brahman; Tattwamasi, Thou are That; Ayamatma Brahma, Self is Brahman; Prajnanam Brahma, knowledge is Brahman
Mahesha – literally, ‘great ruler’; Lord Shiva
Mahima – greatness
Maithuna – sexual union; fusion of male and female energies; one of the five elements of tantra
Mala – rosary made from tulsi, sandalwood, rudraksha or crystal, used as an aid in japa and meditation
Mamta – literally, the feeling of ‘mine’; maternal love; attachment

Manas – rational aspect of mind which creates thought and counter thought

Mandagni – fire that is not too hot

Mandala – diagram within a circumference symbolizing the deeper aspects of man's psyche

Mandaleshwar – head of an ashram

Mandap – raised platform erected for worship or marriage

Mandir – temple

Mangalsutra – mala of black pearl given to a bride on her wedding day

Manobal – willpower

Manjira – percussion instrument like the cymbal

Mansarovar – lake at Kailash where Lord Shiva is said to bathe

Mantra – subtle sound or combination of sound vibrations used for liberating consciousness from the limitations of mundane awareness

Manusmriti – highly respected code of conduct given by the ancient law giver Manu

Marga – path

Marga Sheersha – ninth month of Hindu lunar calendar

Mareech – name of a rakshasa in the Ramayana

Maruts – gods of the wind

Math – spiritual centre

Matra – unit of time; note; vedic chanting uses three matras: udatta, low matra; anudatta, high matra; swarita, middle note

Matrivansha – maternal lineage

Matribhoomi – motherland

Matribhasha – mother tongue

Maya – illusion; partial understanding; wrong notions about self-identity

Mayurasana – peacock pose

Meru – famous mythological mountain; also known as Sumeru, the abode of the gods

Mirabai – female saint born in the early 16th century in Rajasthan, India; a great devotee of Lord Krishna

Mitti – earth; clay

Moha – infatuation, confusion, delusion, attachment; state of ignorance

Moksha – liberation from the cycles of birth, death and rebirth; inner freedom; one of the four purusharthas

Mouna – silence

Mridang – a musical instrument - a large drum made of clay.

Mrityu – death

Mrityuloka – realm of the dead

Mudra – in Indian dance: specific physical positions combined with special bhavas or attitudes. In yoga: psycho-neural gesture which alters and redistributes pranic energy within the mind and body

Mukhia – village chief

Muktinath – place of pilgrimage in the Himalayas, Nepal

Mumukshu – anyone anxious for liberation, especially from mundane existence

Muni – one who contemplates or who has conquered the mind

Murti – statue; symbol

Naam sankirtan – chanting of God's name

Naam smaran – remembrance of God's name

Nachiketa – central figure in the Kathopanishad, to whom Lord Yama imparts the doctrine of immortality of the atman

Nada – psychic or eternal sound

Nadis – psychic nerves; the channels for prana in the astral body

Naga babas – an order of sadhus distinguishable by their nakedness

Naga nath – literally 'master of the snakes'; emanation of Shiva in the form of a serpent

Naimittika karma – action done with purpose

Nakshatra – group of stars in the firmament

Namaz – Muslim prayer

Namo Narayana – 'salutations to you who are a form of Lord Narayana'; used as salutation amongst sannyasins

Nandi – snow white bull, the attendant and vehicle of Lord Shiva

Nara – physical form

Narada – sage, law-giver or political philosopher mentioned in the Rigveda, Ramayana and Mahabharata

Narayana – name of Vishnu, sustainer of the universe

Nataraja mudra – one of the mudras of the Tandava dance which Shiva performed after the death of Sati

Nath – lord; master

Nauli – practice of rotation of the abdominal muscles

Navaratri anushthana – worship of goddess Durga practised during the nine days after the dark moon in October, according to the Hindu lunar calendar

Nawadha bhakti – nine stages of devotion

Neti – cleansing technique for the head; nasal cleansing

Nigrah shakti – power to check or stop

Nirakara – formless; unmanifest

Niranjan – stainless

Niranjani Akhara – one of the ten akharas; lineage to which Swami Satyananda belongs, situated at Mount Abu

Nirguna – a form free of all gunas

Nishkama mantra – mantra recited without expectation or specific purpose

Niswath – without selfish motive

Nitya karma – daily unavoidable action

Nivritti – renunciation of the external world

Nyasa – trust

Nyaya – one of the six darshana or systems of Indian philosophy; logic; recognition of real spiritual experience by the omniscient mind that is all-encompassing and all-pervading

Odhani – upper cloth

Odissi – dance pattern performed in the state of Kerala

Ojas – vitality; sublime sexual energy; kundalini shakti

Om – universal mantra considered to be the origin of all other mantras; cosmic vibration of the universe; see Aum

Om Namah Shivaya – Shiva mantra; ‘I salute Shiva’

Panchagni sadhana – sadhana of sitting in the middle of four fires representing the four directions; east, west, north and south, with the fifth fire, the sun, overhead

Panchakshara – five syllables

Panchami – fifth day of each fortnight of the lunar month

Pandit – priest; learned scholar

Para bhakti – supreme bhakti

Paraloka – cosmic dimension

Paramahamsa – ‘supreme swan’; having completed their work, paramahamsa sannyasins devote themselves totally

to sadhana, thus approaching the final goal of moksha or self-liberation

Paramatma – universal atma; cosmic soul or consciousness

Parameshvara – supreme being

Paraprakriti – transcendental nature

Parinaam – result

Parivrajaka – wandering mendicant

Paropkar – working for the welfare of others

Parvati – a manifestation of the consort of Shiva; his first disciple; mahashakti

Patanjali – rishi who codified the stages of meditation in the system of raja yoga

Paush – month of the Hindu calendar

Pavan – god of the wind

Peepal – tree

Peetha – abode; place; seat

Pera – sweet made from milk

Pitara – ancestors

Pitribhoomi – fatherland

Pitrivansha – paternal lineage

Pooja – worship

Prabhu kripa – the grace of the Lord

Prajaa ranjan maatram – only for the entertainment of subjects

Prajna – wisdom; aspect of knowing where one becomes the knower, the witness

Prakriti – manifest and unmanifest nature; cosmic energy

Pramana – evidence; proof

Prana – vital energy

Pranayama – yogic technique of breathing, breath control and retention which expands the range of vital or pranic energy

Prarabhda karma – unalterable or fixed karma

Prarthana – prayer

Prasad – favour or grace; food or sweets that have been offered to the supreme at the time of worship; sacred food

Prateek – symbol

Pratibha – intellect; understanding from within

Pratibha jnanam – intuition

Pratyahara – withdrawal of the mind from the senses

Pravachan – lecture
Prem – love, affection
Punarjanma – transmigration
Puranas – ancient texts concerning the earliest mythology of the tantric and vedic traditions
Purashcharana – repetition of mantra, following definite rules
Purdah – ‘curtain’; custom in which women are kept hidden from view
Purusha – pure consciousness, totality of consciousness
Purusharthas – four areas of human endeavor to be fulfilled: artha, kama, dharma and moksha; self-effort
Quintal – weighing measure; one hundred kilograms
Raaga – arrangement of notes in Indian classical music; melody
Raaga-raagini – composition of different sounds in Indian classical music to be sung at specific times of the day
Radha – foremost devotee of Lord Krishna
Raga – attachment
Rajarishi – rishi amongst kshatriyas; the warrior class
Rajas – one of the three gunas representing the dynamic, active state of mind and nature
Raja yoga – eight-fold path classified by Sage Patanjali in Yoga Sutras
Rajput – warrior class among the four castes in Hindu tradition
Rakhi – ceremonial thread that a sister ties on her brother’s wrist as a symbol of her love and his role as her protector
Rakshasa – demon; negative or self-defeating force
Rama – heroic and virtuous king, seventh avatara of Vishnu
Ramacharitamanas – epic written by Tulsidas, depicting the life of Sri Rama; written in Avadhi, a local dialect
Ramayana – epic of ancient India relating the life of Sri Rama; written by Valmiki, in Sanskrit
Rasa – blissful essence of love
Rasagulla – sweet made from milk
Rasmalai – sweet made from milk
Rati – intense love in the worldly sense
Rati bhava – intense, passionate feeling
Ratri – night
Rigveda – oldest of the four Vedas

Rishi – seer of truth; realized sage; one who meditates on the self

Roti – yeastless flat bread

Rudraksha – literally ‘Rudra’s eye’; seed of the eleocarpus

Rudras – forms of Shiva; howling energy

Sabji – vegetable

Sadhaka – spiritual aspirant

Sadhaka vritti – attitude of a spiritual aspirant

Sadhana – spiritual practice done regularly for attainment of inner experience and self-realization

Sahaja – spontaneous; easy

Sahasrara chakra – abode of superconsciousness; ‘thousand-petalled lotus’; highest chakra which symbolizes the threshold between the psychic and spiritual realms, located at the crown of the head

Sakama mantra – mantra recited for a particular purpose

Sakara roopa – manifest form

Sakha – friend

Sakshatkar – to perceive with the eyes that tattwa which is not visible; direct perception of God in manifested form

Salwar-kurta – traditional costume of Indian girls

Samadhi – union with the Divine; culmination of meditation; state of unity with object of meditation and universal consciousness

Samaj – society

Samarpan – balanced dedication; *sama*, ‘equipoised, harmonized’; *arpan*, ‘to offer’; surrender

Samaveda – third of the four Vedas; primarily of devotion, worship and contemplation

Samhita – hymns belonging to the earliest tradition of the Vedas

Samkhya – one of the six darshana or systems of Indian philosophy, based on the division of existence into purusha, prakriti and a number of elements

Sampradaya – tradition

Samsara – illusory world; unending circle of birth and death

Samskara – unconscious memory; mental impression stored in the subtle body as an archetype which sets up impulses and trains of thought

Sanskriti – culture; also ‘the art of doing something properly’

Sanatan dharma – system of eternal values
Sanchit karma – accumulated action; subconscious impressions of past lives
Sandhya vandana – prayer and prostration conducted in the evening
Sanjna – noun
Sankalpa – resolve; willpower, determination or conviction
Sankalpa shakti – willpower
Sankranta – period of sankramana; beginning of the year or month
Sannyasa – renunciation; dedication; from *sam*, meaning ‘total’, and *nyasa*, meaning ‘to put in trust’
Sannyasin – renunciate; one who has detached oneself from worldly affairs and strives to attain self-realization
Sansarik prem – worldly love
Santhali – tribespeople of the region of Santhal, where Rikhia is located
Sanyam – self-restraint
Saraswati – the goddess of learning
Sari – traditional dress of Indian women
Sasur – father-in-law
Satapatha Brahmana – ‘Brahmana of the hundred paths’; belonging to Yajurveda; most important of the Brahmanas
Sati – manifestation of the consort of Lord Shiva; also Indian custom in which the wife immolates herself on the funeral pyre of her husband
Sati pativrata – virtuous wife who never violates her marriage vows
Sati pratha – Indian custom in which a widow used to sacrifice herself on the funeral pyre along with her dead husband
Satsang – gathering of spiritually minded people, in which the ideals and principles of truth are discussed; association with the wise
Sattwa – one of the three gunas; pure, unadulterated quality; state of luminosity and harmony
Sattwic – pure
Satya – truth, reality
Satyaloka – plane of truth and reality

Savdhan – to be alert; attentive
Seva – service
Sevak vritti – attitude of a servant
Shabda – sound or word; the materially creative principle
Shaivism – tradition where Shiva is worshipped as the supreme deity
Shakti – inner creative energy; vital energy force
Shaktipat – transmission of power or energy from guru to disciple; form of initiation in kundalini yoga
Shaktipeetha – place where Shakti is worshipped
Shaligram – spherical smooth piece of stone representing Lord Vishnu, found in Nepal
Shankaracharya – enlightened sage who expounded and spread the Advaita Vedanta philosophy throughout India and founded the Dashnami order of sannyasa; spiritual heads of the modern sannyasa traditions from the lineage
Shankha – conch
Shashvat – eternal; everlasting
Shashvatavada – doctrine of eternity
Shastras – scriptures
Shikha – hair tuft at the back of the head
Shishya – disciple
Shiva – ‘auspicious one’; Lord of the yogis; male principle; represents cosmic consciousness
Shivalingam – oval shaped stone symbolizing Lord Shiva
Shivaratri – night of Shiva; also Mahashivaratri; invariably observed on the thirteenth day of the dark half of the Magha month in the Hindu lunar calendar
Shivoham – ‘I am Shiva’, an ancient mantra
Shoonya – void, vacuum, nothingness
Shraddha – faith, sustained through progressive experience and intuition
Shramjeevi – one who earns his livelihood by the means of hard labour
Shravan – fifth month of the Hindu lunar calendar; mid-July to mid-August
Shreekhanda – sweet made from milk
Shudra – one of the four divisions of the caste system in India

Shvetashvataropanishad – belonging to the Black Yajurveda, includes the concepts of Samkhya; theism; identification of the Supreme as Shiva; Shakti and Maya

Shyam – one of the names of Lord Krishna

Siddha – adept or perfected person; one who is able to control the elements and nature

Siddhateerthas – holy places which have retained the vibrations of the tapas of great siddhas; awakened shrine

Siddhi – psychic power, perfection, accomplishment

Sindoor – vermilion powder applied on the forehead

Skanda – a name of Kartikeya, son of Shiva and Parvati

Shmashan bhoomi – cremation ground

Sneha bhava – affectionate feeling like that between siblings

Soham – mantra of the breath; used in ajapa japa

Soma – amrit, nectar

Srimad Bhagavata – sacred book recounting the life of Lord Krishna

Sri Panch – governing body in the akhara system; consisting of five persons, representing Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti and Ganesha

Sthoola sharira – gross body, associated with conscious mind

Stotram – hymn; group of mantas sung in praise of a deity

Stuti – singing the praises of the Lord

Shudra – one of the four varna or divisions of the caste system in India; labourer

Suhaag – from the Sanskrit word ‘saubhagya’ meaning good fortune; auspicious

Sukhman – alternate pronunciation of sushumna nadi

Sukharashi – great pleasure or happiness

Sukshma sharira – subtle or astral body, associated with the subconscious mind

Sumerani – small wrist mala of twenty-seven beads

Surati – one-pointed spiritual awareness; remembrance of mantra or divine name

Surya – sun; the sun god

Surya namaskara – literally ‘salute to the sun’, a series of twelve asanas for revitalizing prana

Sushumna nadi – central nadi in the spine which conducts the kundalini or spiritual force from mooladhara to sahasrara

Sutra – thread of thought which outlines the ancient spiritual texts
Swadhyaya – self-study, self-knowledge, self-awareness
Swayamvara – from *swayam*, self, and *vara*, bridegroom; tradition where bride selects her husband
Swarloka – divine plane of existence
Syad Vad – doctrine of probability; Jain philosophy
Talaq – divorce
Tamas – one of the three gunas; state of inertia, dullness or ignorance
Tanpura – stringed drone instrument for musical accompaniment
Tandava Nritya – dance of Lord Shiva symbolizing the destruction of the universe, after which he is named Nataraja
Tantra – ancient universal science, philosophy and culture which deals with the transcendence of human nature from the present mundane level of evolution and understanding to transcendental knowledge, experience and awareness; process of expansion of mind and liberation of energy
Tapoloka – plane of liberated souls
Tapasya – austerity; process of burning impurities
Tarka – meaning derived from reference or reasoning
Tattwa – essential element; true or real state
Teej – important festival of Rajasthan, celebrated in June/July; presiding deity is Parvati as the bride leaving her parents' home for her husband's
Teertha – sacred place
Thakur – titled elderly person
Thandai – cool drink containing crushed marijuana leaves
Tika – red paste used by Indian women on the forehead
Titiksha – endurance; one of the six-fold virtues
Tulsi – holy basil
Tulsidas – famous Indian saint who wrote Ramacharitamans
Tyaga – renunciation
Uddharak – saviour
Uddiyana bandha – abdominal retraction lock
Upadesh – instruction; verbal command; guidance
Upanishads – literally 'to sit close by and listen'; ancient vedic texts, conveyed by sages, rishis or seers containing their experiences and teachings on the ultimate reality

Upasana – personalized form of worship
Upsarga – disease; possession by an evil spirit
Uttarayan – six months when the sun moves north of the equator, 22nd December–21st June
Vairagya – non-attachment
Vaishnavas – tradition in which Vishnu is worshipped as the supreme deity
Vaishya – one of the four varna or divisions of the caste system in India; business man
Vajra – thunderbolt; nadi concerned with the flow of ojas
Vajroli mudra – contraction and release of the urinary passage to promote brahmacharya
Vama marga – the path of left-hand tantra
Vamachara – left-hand practice in tantra; *vama* meaning ‘left’, *achara* meaning ‘practice’
Vandana – prayer; sixth of the nine modes of bhakti
Varuna – god of water
Vasana – strong desire
Vashikara – control
Vashishta – guru of Rama
Vatsalya bhava – love between mother and child
Vastu – that which really exists
Vasus – celestials; demi-gods, eight in number; always present in light or luminous radiation
Vedanta – ‘end of perceivable knowledge’; one of the six darshanas or systems of the vedic philosophy, which deals with transcendental and manifest nature of consciousness
Vedas – ancient scriptural texts of Sanatan, or eternal, dharma; revealed texts expressing the knowledge of the whole universe; the four Vedas are: Rig, Yajur, Sama, Arthava
Videha mukti – beyond body consciousness
Vikara – defect, deterioration
Vipassana – Buddhist meditation practice
Virat – cosmic Vishnu
Vishaya – object of sense perception
Vishnu – the second of the three aspects of divinity; the sustainer of the universe
Vitrishna – free from desire, content

Viveka – discrimination; right knowledge or understanding
Viveka Chudamani – a book of instructions on spiritual progress and the way to self-realization, by Adi Shankaracharya
Vritti – mental modification
Vyaghra kriya – cleansing practice similar to kunjla kriya, performed with a full stomach
Yagyopaveet – sacred thread
Yajna – any work which is beneficial to one and all; complete ritual of fire ceremony performed for external and internal purification
Yajnavalkya – great sage of the Upanishadic era
Yakshas – a people, deities, kings known in the Brahmanical, Buddhist and Jain pantheons
Yamaraja – god of death
Yantra – geometrical symbol used to develop concentration and meditation
Yatra – pilgrimage
Yatris – pilgrims
Yoga – union; from yuj, to yoke; system of thought and practices leading to a state of union between two opposite poles, i.e. individual and universal awareness
Yoga danda – specially designed rod which yogis rest in the armpit to change the flow of the breath in the nostrils
Yoga Sutras – ancient authoritative text on raja yoga by Patanjali
Yoga Vashishtha – book containing the teachings which Guru Vashishtha gave to Lord Rama
Yoni – source; number of possible births, eighty-four lakh in number
Yuga – aeon, age; of which there are four: Satya yuga, Treta yuga, Dwapara yuga and Kali yuga

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Notes

Notes

Notes

Swami Satyananda was born in Almora (Uttaranchal) in 1923. Drawn to spiritual life from an early age, he left home at the age of eighteen, and in 1943 surrendered himself to Swami Sivananda in Rishikesh who initiated him into Dashnami sannyasa in 1947. He served his guru for twelve years, perfecting every aspect of spiritual life. Thereafter, he travelled throughout the Indian subcontinent as a wandering ascetic.



Realizing the need of the times as scientific rendition of the ancient system of yoga, he founded the International Yoga Fellowship in 1956 and the Bihar School of Yoga in 1963. During the next twenty years, Swami Satyananda hoisted the flag of yoga in every corner of the world, consolidated BSY into a foremost institution of yoga, and authored over eighty major texts on yoga, tantra and spiritual life.

‘Satyananda Yoga’ became a tradition which combines classical knowledge with experiential understanding and a modern outlook. In 1984 he founded the Yoga Research Foundation to synchronize scientific research and yoga, and Sivananda Math to assist the underprivileged. In 1988, at the peak of his achievements, he renounced everything and adopted kshetra sannyasa, living as a paramahansa ascetic. In 1989 Rikhia was revealed to him, where he came to live and performed higher vedic sadhanas in seclusion. Receiving the command to provide for his neighbours in 1991, he allowed the ashram to help the underprivileged villages in the region. From 1995 onwards, he performed a twelve-year Rajasooya Yajna with the sankalpa of peace, plenty and prosperity for all, and in 2007 he announced the establishment of Rikhiapeeth with its mandate to ‘serve, love, give’.

Swami Satyananda attained mahasamadhi, a yogic accomplishment of discarding the body at will to become one with the universal consciousness, in 2009, in the presence of his disciples.



*“Bhakti will be the science of the twenty-first century, then
spiritual discipline will be known as a science of life.”*

After five years of intensive sadhana, Swami Satyananda Saraswati emerged from seclusion in November 1994. Thousands of spiritual seekers from all over the world travelled to Rikhia, India, to be in his presence and to hear him speak on bhakti. *Bhakti Yoga Sagar, Volume One* presents a selection of Swami Satyananda's talks and answers to questions during that time. Topics include spiritual life, developing one's relationship with God, the science of bhakti, sannyasa, his mission, projects in the local villages and the direction of yoga in the 21st century. These revelations from a spiritual master have the power to transform one's life.

Includes 16 colour photographs.

